Camille

Alexander Dumas

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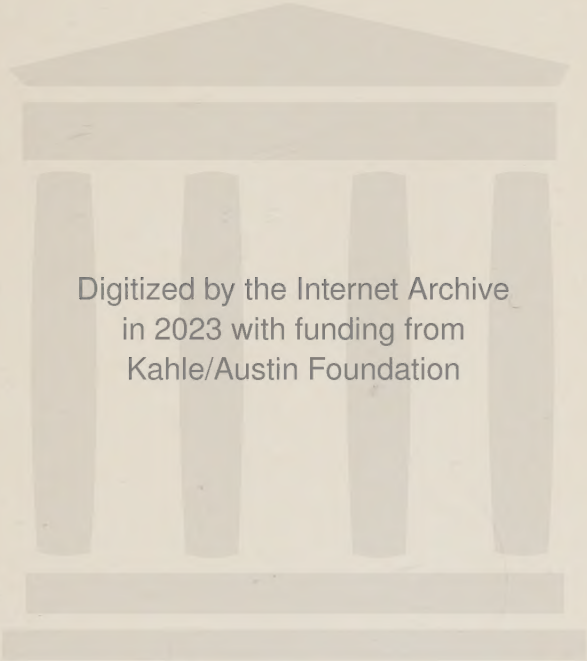
To
Florence Nelson
Nov. 20. 1911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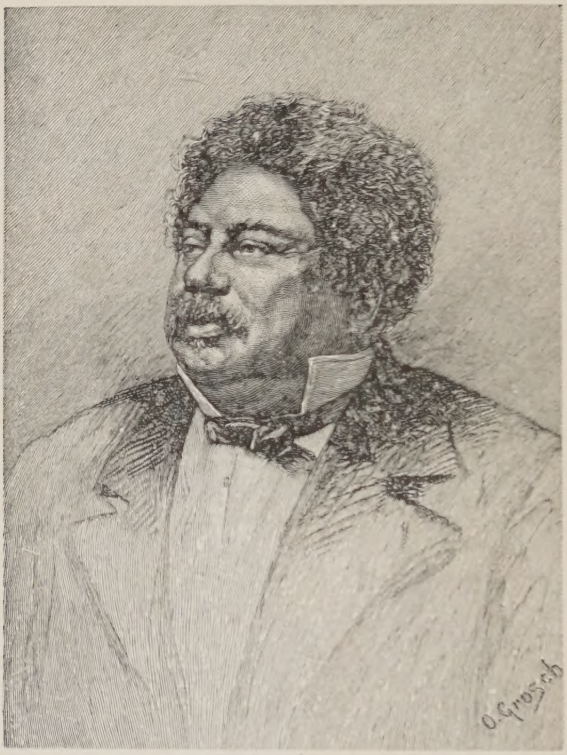
O. Grosch

CAMILLE:

OR

THE FATE OF A COQUETTE

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

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CAMILLE; or, the FATE OF A COQUETTE

By ALEXANDRE DUMAS.

PREFACE.

In the year of grace 1845, in the season of abundance and peace, when all the favors of mind, beauty and talent surrounded the France of the day, there was a young person whose charming face by its presence alone attracted a certain feeling of mingled admiration and deference, even from those that saw her for the first time, and were ignorant of both her name and condition. She was possessed of the natural air, the ingenuous look, the attractive bearing—a bearing at once bold and modest—of a woman used to society. Her face was serious, and her very smile was imposing, and from simply seeing her walk, one might, like Ellevion, say, with certainty: "That woman is either a virgin or a duchess."

She was no duchess, for she was born at the foot of a difficult ladder, and needed to be beautiful and charming to have ascended with so light a step the first rounds of that ladder, in the eighteen years which might have passed over her head. I remember that I met her for the first time in the abominable pit of a theater in the Boulevards, badly lighted, and filled with the crowds that usually run after melodramas. Among the audience there were more blouses than coats, more round caps than hats, more *paletots* than new coats. The audience talked of everything—of the drama and of fried potatoes—of the Gymnasia of Greece and Paris—but whenever this woman appeared on the stage, one might say that she illuminated everything.

whether serious or burlesque, with her glance. She crossed the mud-stained passageway, as she would the Boulevard on a rainy day, and instinctively raised her dress that she might not touch its filth, without any idea of showing—why should she ?—her tiny boot, round ankle, and silken stockings. Her whole toilet was in harmony with her blithe and youthful bearing. Her oval and pale face corresponded with the grace she diffused, like a perfume, around her.

She entered and crossed before this confused crowd. We were amazed, Listz and I, when she sat familiarly on the bench on which we were, for neither of us had ever seen her. She was a woman of sense and intelligence, and soon spoke to the great artist. She told him that she had heard him once and that she had dreamed of him. He, like one of those sonorous instruments which reply to the first breeze of May, listened with admiration to a tongue so instinct with ideas, at once so eloquent and dreamy—with that wonderful instinct which he possesses, and with the habit of the world officials, also possessed in the highest degree by the world of artists, he asked himself who the woman could be, who thus approached him so familiarly, and who, after the exchange of a few words, treated him haughtily, as if he had been presented in London to one of the *coterie* of the Duchess of Sutherland.

The performance was, however, about to be resumed, and the salon was empty. The unknown lady, her companion and ourselves alone were left. She approached the fire-place, and she placed her shivering feet in front of the sparkling grate so that we were able to see from the broidered hem of her under-clothing to her pink bonnet, her glove so fitting her hand that it seemed a picture, her handkerchief adorned with royal lace, and in her ears two pearls which would have made an Indian Queen jealous. All this she wore as if she had been born in silk and velvet, beneath the gilt draperies of the old *faubourgs*, with a crown on her brow and a crowd of flatterers at her feet. Her bearing corresponded with her language, her thought, her smile; her toilet suited her person, and one would have sought in vain, in the loftiest places in the world for a being more beautiful and more in harmony with her ornaments, dress and conversation.

Listz amazed at such a wonder in such a place, and at

so pleasant an interlude, after so terrible a melodrama, gave full vent to his fantasy. He is not only a great artist, but an eloquent man; he knows how to speak to women, passing, as they do, from one idea to another, selecting those which are the most opposite. He adores paradoxes, and flits from the serious to the burlesque. I cannot describe to you with what art, with what tact and infinite taste he passed over with this woman, the name of whom even he was ignorant of, the whole gamut of commonplaces, and all the elegant garniture of the conversation of every day.

Thus they talked during the whole of the third act of the said melodrama; for mere politeness' sake, a question from time to time was put me, but, as I was just then in a most ill-humored mood, when all enthusiasm is forbidden to the human soul, I am assured that the lady thought me very stupid and absurd, and that she was perfectly correct.

The winter, summer and autumn passed, and again; but in all the brilliancy of a benefit at the opera, with a certain something of ostentation, we saw the door of one of the front boxes open, and the beauty I have described, with a bouquet in her hand, come to the front seat. She it was, but now she was dressed in the most brilliant manner, and shone with all the luster of conquest. Her hair was beautifully dressed with diamonds and flowers, and trimmed with that buoyant grace which gave them the semblance of life; she had her arms and throat bare, and wore bracelets and necklaces of emeralds. She had in her hand a bouquet of, I cannot tell what color, for the eyes of a young man and the imaginations of a child would be needed to distinguish the hue of any flower at which she looked; at our age, we attend only to the cheek and to the brilliancy of the eye; we care little about accessories; if one ever thinks about consequences, one does so in connection with the person's self, and in that point of view, even, has enough to do.

On that evening, Duprez was to contend with the rebel voice, the final revolt of which he foresaw; but which the public as yet did not suspect. Among a most attentive audience, only a few amateurs saw fatigue concealed by weariness, and divined the artist's exhaustion by his vast efforts to deceive himself. Beyond all doubt, the young woman of whom I speak was a skilful judge, and after a

few moments' attention, one might see that she was not under the usual charm, for she threw herself back in the box, and with her opera-glass began to examine the physiognomy of the audience.

She certainly knew many of the most select of the spectators. From the moving of her glass, one might have known the fair spectatress could have told more than one thing about the young men of every rank. She first looked at one, then to another, without paying to either any peculiar attention, while all, by a smile, or a rapid glance, acknowledged the attention she had bestowed on them. From the darker boxes, and from the orchestra, glances, burning as the flashes of a volcano, were directed at the young woman; the latter, however, she did not see. If, however, her glance chanced to be directed at the woman who really belonged to the Parisian fashion, a something, which was most painful, at once passed into her whole attitude. She looked bitterly aside, however, if her glance fell on one of those doubtful reputations, yet beautiful faces, which usurp the best places at public amusements on days of great theatrical festivals.

Her companion—for on this occasion she was escorted by a gentleman—was a young man, half Parisian, but yet preserving some relics of his paternal home, which he had come, acre by acre, to eat up in this city of perdition. This young man, in his dawn, was proud of this beauty in her apogee, and was not ashamed to show that she really was his, by surrounding her with the thousand attentions so dear to a young woman when extended by one she loves, but which are so unpleasant when addressed to a soul otherwise occupied. They were heard unheeded, and though seen, not noticed. What did he say? The lady did not know, but sought to reply, and the few words she uttered really became painful.

Though they did not know it, they were not alone in this box, the cost of which was equivalent to the support of a family for half a year. Between them sat the assiduous physician of the sick at heart, of broken spirits, of the wretched and hopeless—Ennui—the huge Mephistophiles of errant Marguerites and lost Clarissas, of all those goddesses, daughters of chance, who wander through life to ruin.

The poor sinner, then, surrounded by the adoration and

homage of youth, was a victim of ennui, which was both her pardon and excuse, as it was the punishment of her passing prosperity. Ennui had been the great evil of her life. With crushed affections, forced to submit to the necessity of ephemeral connections, and passing insensibly from one love to another, why did she stifle this dawning inclination? She had become indifferent to all things, forgot the bond of yesterday, and thought no more of the passion of to-day than she did of that which would come with to-morrow.

Poor woman! she needed solitude, and was completely besieged; she needed silence, and the same things forever were rung in her ear; she wished to be calm, and was forever hurried to tumults and public places; she wished to be loved—they told her she was beautiful; she, therefore, abandoned herself without resistance to the whirlpool which swept her away. What a youth was hers? How well she understood Mlle. de l'Enclos, who, when at the summit of prosperity almost fabulous, the friend of Conde and Mme. de Maintenon, said, with a sigh of regret: "Had any one foretold me such a life, I would have died of terror and grief."

When the opera was over the young woman left, though the performance was but half concluded. They expected Bouffe, Dejazet, and the comedians from the Palais Royal, without mentioning Carlotta Grisi in the ballet, an actress, in her days of intoxication and youth so very attractive. She would not wait for a Vaudeville, but insisted at once on returning home, at a time when all the rest of the world expected three hours more pleasure amid music and the luster of light.

I saw her leave her box and wrap herself in her double cloak of ermine. The young man who had accompanied her seemed annoyed, and, as he no longer had to deck himself with this woman, he was not at all uneasy about her being cold—I remember that he aided her in putting her cloak on her shoulder, which was very white, and that she looked at me, though without recognizing me, with a painful smile, glancing at once at the tall young man, who was then paying the box-keeper, and waiting for change for a five-franc piece. "Keep it all, madame," said she, with a gracious courtesy.

I saw her go down the great stairway, her white dress

contrasting with her red cloak, and her handkerchief fastened over her head under her chin; the jealous lace fell over her eyes, but what mattered that? The lady had played her part, her day was over, and she no longer wished to be beautiful. On that night she left the young man at the door.

There is one thing worthy of remark and altogether to her praise; that this young woman, who in the season of her youth, had expended gold and silver by the handful—for, in her caprice and benevolence were united, and she cared little for that money which cost her so dearly—was the heroine of none of those stories of scandal and sins, gaming debts, and duels, which so many other women in their lives have excited. She, on the contrary, was famed for her beauty alone, for her taste, and for the fashion she originated and imposed on the world; none ever connected her with ruined fortunes, with the debtor's prison, with the treachery which usually accompanies stolen loves. There was around this woman so soon torn away by death, a certain bearing, a certain irresistible decency. She had lived apart, isolated from the world in which she dwelt, and, instead of a calmer region, where all might be gained, she lived, alas! where all is lost.

I saw her again, for the third time, on the day of the inauguration of the Northern Railroad, on the occasion of one of those entertainments given by Brussels to France —become its neighbor and associate. On this occasion an immense assemblage of all the railroads of North Belgium had amassed all its splendors, the product of its hedges and gardens, and the diamonds of its crowns— a crowd of uniforms, orders and gauze robes, filled up the site of a fete, the like of which will never be seen again. The French peerage, the German nobles, Spanish, Belgium, Flanders, and Holland, decked in the old jewels cotemporary with Louis XIV. and his court, the massive acquisitions of industry; and more than one elegant Parisian, like a butterfly amid a swarm of bees, hurried to this festival of industry and travel, of vanquished iron, of flame obeying conquered time. It was a strange pell-mell in which all the power and grace of creation was represented, from the oak to the flower, from mud to the amethyst—amid this movement of people and kings, of princes, artists, smiths, and the great coquettes of Europe, they,

or rather I, saw appear, paler and whiter than usual, the charming person already stricken with the terrible malady which was to drag her to the grave.

She had come to the ball in spite of her name, protected by her dazzling beauty. She attracted every eye, and was followed by the homage of all; a flattering murmur saluted her passage, and those even who knew, bowed to her; she, though in the calmness of her habitual disdain, received this praise as homage due to her. She was not amazed to tread on carpets which the feet of the queen had pressed. More than one prince paused to see her, and their glances told her what women understand so well; "I think you very beautiful, and am sorry to leave you."

On that evening she hung on the arm of a stranger, fair as a German, impassible as an Englishman—overdressed—who, by his coat and by his gait, showed that at that moment he was committing one of those actions for which men ever reproach themselves.

The bearing of this man was certainly unpleasant to the sensitive being on his arm. She discovered this by means of her sixth sense, and redoubled her hauteur, for her wonderful instinct told her that her escort was ashamed of himself, then her insolence increased, and she began more and more, to trample on the remorse of the angry boy. Few can understand how much she then suffered. What did that nameless woman, on the arm of a nameless man, feel? The man seemed to disapprove, and his attitude seemed menacing, and betokened disapprobation, and a heart undecided and ill at ease.

This Anglo-German, however, was cruelly punished when at the turning of a great pathway of light and verdure, our Parisian met a friend of her own—a man with pretense, who, from time to time, asked the tip of her finger, or a wreath of her smile—an artist or painter who knew, better than any one who had seen so little of her, how perfect a model she was of all that is elegant and attractive in youth.

"Ah!" said she, "you here? Give me your arm, and let us dance." Quitting the arm of her cavalier, she at once began the *valse a deux temps*, which is seduction itself when Strauss inspires, and when instinct with the German Rhine, its true country. She danced wonder-

fully—neither too quickly, nor too languidly—obedient to the interior cadence as well as to the visible melody, scarcely touching the elastic floor with her light foot. A circle was formed around them, and all were emulous of being touched by the tresses which followed the waltz, or who would touch the robe impressed with light perfumes. Gradually the circle was again narrowed, and other dancers paused to look at them, until the young man who had brought her with him lost her in the crowd, and sought in vain to possess himself of the charming arm to which he had lent his own with so much repugnance.

Two days afterward she went from Brussels to Spa. She traveled at that hour when the mountains, covered with verdure, suffer the sun to penetrate them. Then the invalids are seen to repose, after the fatigues of the entertainments of the past winter, and to prepare themselves for those of the season which is to come at Spa. No other fever than that of the dance is known; and there is no other languor than that of absence—no other remedies than gossip about dancing and music, and the gamester's emotion, in the evening when roulette is open, and the luster of its countless lights illumines mountains of gold, and when the echo of the orchestra fills the mountains.

At Spa our Parisian was received with an impressment which was strange, indeed, for a little village of peculiarly sedate managers, which willingly abandons to Baden, its rival, the distinguished persons without name, fame, or fortune. At Spa, therefore, there was a general surprise when it was said that a woman so young and beautiful was seriously sick, and when the afflicted physicians announced that they had rarely met with more courage and resignation.

Her health was asked after with great zeal and care; and, after a serious consultation, calmness, quiet, sleep, and repose, were recommended to her. These were the dreams of her life. At this advice she smiled and shook her head with an incredulous air, for she knew that all was possible to her except the possession of those chosen blisses which are portions of certain women, and of them alone. She promised however, to obey for a few days, and to restrict herself to this regimen of isolation. The effort, however, was vain; for soon after, wild and mad with artificial joy, she was seen ascending on horseback

the most difficult passages, astonishing by her gayety the alley of the Seven Hours, which had found her dreaming and reading beneath its trees.

She soon became the *lionne* of this beautiful vicinity. She presided at every festival, and gave the initiative to every ball—imposing her favorite airs on the orchestra; and at night, at the hour when a little sleep would have done her so much good, she amazed the most intrepid gamesters by the masses of gold she heaped up before her, and which she risked at once, perfectly indifferent either to lose or gain. She had appealed to gaming as an appendix to her profession, to kill the hours which were making her such as she was. She had yet this piece of good fortune in the cruel game of life; by a rare chance she had preserved friends. It is almost one of the characteristics of these sad liaisons, that, after adoration, they leave but ashes, and dust, and annihiliation! How often has the lover passed his mistress without recognition, and how often has the unfortunate woman appealed to him in vain for aid! How often is the hand consecrated to flowers vainly extended for alms?

This was not the case with our heroine. She fell without complaint, and having fallen, found aid and assistance from amid those who adored her in her better days. Those who had been her rivals, and, perhaps, her enemies, contended for the privilege of watching at the foot of her bed, to expiate their nights of folly by nights of devotion; now when death drew near, and was prepared to tear aside the veil, and when, with the victim stretched before him, her accomplices saw the truth of that sad sentence *Væ ridentibus!* Woe, to those who laugh! Woe, that is to say, woe to profane joys! woe, woe, to passing fancies! woe to youth which strays in evil ways, for at certain spots of the pathway it is always necessary to retrace our steps, or else fall into the abyss which awaits us at twenty.

Thus she died, kindly rocked and consoled by a thousand fraternal modes. She no longer had lovers, but never had so many friends. She did not, however, regret life. She knew what awaited her if she returned again to health, and that she would again have to bear to her pale lips the cup of pleasure, the dregs of which she had drank prematurely.

more than she had exhibited in her life; and, after so much luxury and scandal, she had the European good taste to wish to be buried at dawn, in some silent and concealed place, without fracas or clamor, like a virtuous matron going to rejoin her husband, her father, her mother, and her children, and all that she loved in this cemetery which is below.

It happened, though, in spite of herself, that her death was a kind of event. It was talked of for three days—a long time in that city of noise, passions, and of perpetually renewed festivals which never pall. After three days the doors of her house were occupied; and the long windows which looked on the Boulevard, opposite the church of St. Magdalen, her patron, were opened, and again admitted sunlight and air into the rooms from which they had been excluded. One might have said she was about to reappear; not a trace of the odor of death had remained in the silken curtains, in the long drapery, or on the Gobelin tapestry, whence flowers seemed to spring whenever they were touched by her child-like feet.

Every piece of furniture in this sumptuous room was exactly in order. The bed on which she died was scarcely rumpled. At the foot of the bed, a cushioned stool preserved the traces of the knees of the man who had closed her eyes. The old clock, which had rung the hour to Madame Dubarry and Madame Pompadour, yet struck as of yore. The silver candelabras were decked with candles prepared for the last *conversazione*. The monthly rose and hardy sweetbriar yet contended with death; they were withering for the want of a little water; their mistress had died for the want of a little happiness and hope.

Alas! on the walls were hung the picture of Diaz, whom she had been one of the first to adopt as the true painter of the spring of the year; and her portrait, drawn *a trois crayons*, by Vidal, who had drawn her beautiful head, ravashing, and chaste, and of finished elegance; and since the death of this goddess, he has ever refused to paint any but chaste women, but made an exception of her who contributed so much to the rising renown, both of the artist and the world.

All yet spoke of her. The birds sang in their gilded cages, and on the buhl furniture, under the glass door, was seen a collection worthy of the most careful antiquary,

of the choicest manufactures of Sevres, the most exquisite paintings of Saxony, the enamel of Pelitot, the nudities of Klinstadt, the Pampines of Boucher. She loved the coquettish art, for it is graceful and elegant—vice ever having its intellect where innocence has its nudities. She loved shepherds and shepherdesses in biscuit. Florentine bronzes, terra cottas, enamels, and all the charms of taste, luxury, and society. In them she saw so many emblems of her beauty and of her life. Alas! she also was a useless ornament, a fancy, a frivolous toy, crushed by the first shock; a brilliant product of expiring society; a bird of passage; the aurora of a moment.

She had carried to such a hight the science of interior comfort and self-adulation, that nothing could compare with her dresses, her linen, and the least trifle she used; for the decking of her beauty was, by far, the dearest and most charming occupation of her life.

I have heard ladies of the first rank, and most coquettish tastes of Paris, express surprise at the careful luxury of the merest article of the toilet. Her comb had cost an immense price, and her hair-brush was fastened with gold. The gloves she had worn were sold, so small was her hand. The boots she wore were also sold; and virtuous women contended together as to who would don her Cinderella slippers. All was sold—even a shawl she had worn three years—even her brilliant feathered bird, which warbled a sad melody taught by its mistress. Her pictures, her love letters were sold; her hair—all passed away; and her family, which looked aside when this woman drove by in her carriage, drawn by swift, English horses, gorged itself triumphantly with the gold her spoils had produced. They kept nothing that had belonged to her, from motives of self-respect. Chaste persons!

Such was this strange woman—a thing apart, even in Parisian passion; and you may fancy my surprise when a book appeared possessing such acute interest, and especially so true and recent. It was called the "Lady with the Camellias." It was at once spoken of, ordinarily as one speaks of pages impressed with the sincere emotion of youth; and all seemed pleased to see that the son of Alexander Dumas, just released from college, was already treading in the brilliant footsteps of his father. He had vivacity and inward emotion; he had his rapid style, with

a little of that natural dialogue, so varied and facile, which confers to the romances of this great inventor the charm, taste and accent of comedy.

The book had a great success; but soon, readers, shaking off their first impression, observed that the "Lady with the Camellias" was not a mere romance; that she had lived and loved recently; that this drama was no imaginary, but a tragedy in private life—the wounds of which were yet new and bleeding. Then persons became anxious about the name of the heroine, her position in society, her fortune, and ornaments, and rumors of her amours. The public, anxious to know everything—and which in fact, knows all—learned the details, and the book was again read, so that, the truth being recognized, the interest of the recital was enhanced.

Now by an extraordinary chance, this book, printed without pretense, as a mere romance—scarcely destined to live a day—is reprinted, with all the honors of a universally accepted book. Read it, and in all the details you will see the touching story in which this young man, so extraordinarily gifted, has written elegy and drama, with so many tears—such success and happiness. JULES JANIN.

CHAPTER I.

I NOTIFY the reader to feel sure of the reality of this story, all the characters of which, except the heroine, yet exist.

There are also in Paris persons cognizant of the majority of the facts I relate here who would confirm them if my testimony did not suffice. Peculiar circumstances enable me alone to write them, for I was the confident of the last details, without which I could not make the story interesting and complete.

Now, how did I become acquainted with all these details? On the 12th of March, 1847, I read in La Rue Lafitte, a great, yellow bill, announcing a sale of furniture, and of rich objects of curiosity, caused by the death of the owner. The bill did not mention the name of the person deceased, but the sale took place at the Chaussee d'Antin, No. 9, and would continue from noon to five o'clock. The bill also

stated that, from the 13th to the 14th, the articles could be examined. I was always a lover of curiosities, and I resolved not to lose this opportunity, if not purchasing, at least of examining. On the next day I went to the number mentioned. It was early; yet in the room were visitors, some of the female sex, who, though clad in velvet, and covered with cashmere, and waited for at the door by elegant equipages, saw with astonishment, and even with admiration, the luxury spread before them. Subsequently, I understood this admiration and amazement, for I, also, when I began to examine, saw at once that I was in the domicile of a woman not a wife. Now, if there be one thing which fashionable women wish to see (and fashionable were there), it is the internal life of one of those women, the equipages of whom every day crash against their own, for they both have, side by side, their boxes at the opera, and at the Italians, and who exhibit the insolent opulence of their beauty, their gems, and their scandals.

She, at whose house I was, was dead, and the most doubtful woman could penetrate to her very chamber. Death had purified the air of this splendid cesspool; but they had, besides, the excuse that they had come to the sale of the effects of they knew not whom. They had read the advertisements, and wished to see what they had spoken of, and to make their selection in advance. There was nothing wonderful in that, and nothing to prevent their seeking, amid all these wonders, the traces of the courtesan's life, of which they had heard such strange stories. Unfortunately, mystery had died with the goddess, and, in spite of their anxiety, these ladies saw that the sale took place after decease, and that no trace of the existence of the mistress was for sale. There was, however, enough to occupy them. The furniture was superb rosewood and buhl: Sevres and China, Saxon statuettes, and velvet and lace were not wanting.

I walked through the rooms, and followed the curious dames who preceded me. They entered a room hung with Persian carpets, and I was about to follow when they left, when they came out smiling, as if they were ashamed of their curiosity. I became at once more anxious to enter the room, which was the *toilette*, filled with all the minute details in which the deceased seemed to have been enwrapped, even to the extremity of prodigality.

On the table, leaning against the wall, which was three feet broad by six in length, shone all the treasure of Ancoc and Audiot. It was a magnificent collection, and not one of the thousand objects needed for the toilet of one like her, at whose house we were, was of any other metal than gold and silver; yet this collection had been made gradually, and had not even been completed by death.

I was not offended at the sight of the *toilette* of an unmarried mistress, and I was amused by the examination of the details, and observed that all these magnificently covered utensils had various names and crests. I looked at all these things, each representing the prostitution of the poor girl, and I said, God had been merciful to her, in as much as he did not permit her to reach the usual punishment, and suffered her to die in her season of luxury and beauty, before age, the first death of courtesans, intervened.

What, in fact, is more sad to see than the old age of a woman who has no dignity, and inspires no interest? The eternal repentance, not for the evil life led, but for erroneous calculation, and money badly spent is one of the saddest stories one can tell. I once knew an old woman of this class, who retained of her antecedents only a daughter, of whom it has been said that she was almost as beautiful. This poor girl—to whom her mother never said: "You are my daughter," only to order her to nourish her old age, as she had nourished her youth—this poor girl's name was Louise; and in her obedience to her mother she surrendered herself without passion or pleasure, as she would have done to any trade they would have taken the trouble to teach her. The continual sight of debauch—precocious debauch—heightened by the perpetual unhealthy state of the girl, annihilated in her the appreciation of right and wrong, impressed upon her, perhaps by God, but which it never had occurred to any one to develop.

I never shall forget this young girl; who passed every day down the Boulevards at the same hour. Her mother always accompanied her, as a true mother accompanies a true daughter. I was then young, and was disposed to receive the facile morality of that age, but remember that the right of this scandalous surveillance filled me with contempt and disgust.

Add to this, that no virgin's fall ever seemed to me so full of innocence, or with such a sad and suffering expression. She seemed the picture of resignation.

In the morning the face of the young girl was beautiful; amid the debauchery, the programme of which her mother kept, it seemed the sinner retained yet one happiness. Why, after all, had God, who made her without force, left her without consolation under the harmful burden of life? On the day, then, that she saw herself likely to be a mother, all that yet remained chaste within her quivered with joy. The soul has strange refuges, and Louise announced the news which made her so happy to her mother. It is sad to say, but we do not write immorality here because it is our pleasure to do so; but, to recount a true story, it would perchance be best for us to conceal, did we not think it would from time to time be better to reveal the martyrdom of those beings who are despised without being judged; it is shameful, we say, but the mother told the daughter that they had not enough for two; and too little for three; that children were useless, and that the cares of maternity is time lost.

On the next day a *sage femme*, whom at another time we will point out as a friend of the mother, came to see Louise, who remained a few days in bed, and who then reappeared, paler and weaker than before.

Three months after a man had pitied her, and undertook her moral and physical cure. The shock, however, had been too violent, and Louise died of the consequences of indiscretion.

How does the mother now live? God only knows.

This story recurred to me while I contemplated the toilet accessories of silver, and some time rolled around while I made these reflections, for there was no one in the room but myself, and a keeper at the door, the business of whom it was to see that I stole nothing.

I approached this man who, as I did so, seemed most uneasy.

"Sir," said I, "can you tell me the name of the person who lived here?"

"Who—Camille Gautier? I knew her by name and sight."

"What!" said I, "is she dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"About three weeks since."

"Why do you suffer her rooms to be visited?"

"The creditors thought it would enhance the sale. Persons would examine the articles in advance. That, you see, encourages competition."

"Then she was in debt?"

"Ah, sir, to a great extent."

"The sale will satisfy them?"

"It will do much more."

"What will become of the surplus?"

"It will go to her family."

"She has friends?"

"So it seems."

"Thank you, sir."

The officer was satisfied with my honesty, and I left.

Poor girl! said I, as I went home. Her death must have been a sad one, for in this world one has no friends except on the condition of good behavior. I could not but pity Camille Gautier

Many people will think this very ridiculous, but I am very indulgent to courtesans, and will not even take the trouble to argue about the matter.

One, day, as I was going to the Prefecture for a passport I saw a girl being led away by the gens-d'armes. I do not know what she had done, but she shed warm tears as she embraced a child, from whom her arrest separated her. From that time forward, I never, at the first glance, felt contempt for a woman.

CHAPTER II.

The sale was fixed for the 16th. The interval of a day was interposed, which enabled the upholsterers to take down the hangings.

At that time I had just returned from my travels, and it would not have been natural if I had not heard of the death of Camille, as one of those great events always told to persons on their return to the capital, from the country. Camille was beautiful; during their lives, such women make so much noise, that their death excite no attention. They are like those gems which set as they arose, without

any brilliancy. When they die young, all the lovers learn their fate at once, for at Paris, all the admirers of a well-known girl live in intimacy. A few recollections on the subject are exchanged, and the lives of all pass without the incident calling forth even a tear.

Now that I am twenty-five, tears are so scarce that I cannot shed them for everybody. It is much to weep even for parents, and they are right in estimating tears so highly.

Though my ciphers were on none of Camille's articles, the instinctive pity, the natural intelligence which I just now owned, made me think of her death longer, perhaps, than I expected to have done.

I remember that I often met Camille at the *Champs Elysees*, whither she came every day in her little blue coupe, drawn by two magnificent bay horses, and observed a bearing in her, rare indeed in those of her kind, and which was enhanced by a yet rarer beauty.

These unfortunate beings, when they go out, are always accompanied by one knows not whom.

As no man wishes to advertise the secret love he entertains for them—as they entertain a horror of solicitude, they take with them, or at least those who are least happy, and have no coach, one of those old women of society, every motion of whom is instinct with elegance, but whom all can address without fear, if they need any information about the person they accompany.

This was not the case with Camille, who always went to the *Champs Elysees* alone in her carriage, where she sank, as much as possible; in the winter, wrapping herself in a great cashmere, and in summer dressed in the simplest habit.

She did not pass from the Rond-point to the entry of the *Champs Elysees*, as all her colleagues do, but drove rapidly in the road. There she left her carriage, walked for an hour, and returned as rapidly as her horses could draw her.

All these circumstances, which I had frequently witnessed, passed before me and I regretted the death of this woman, as we regret the total destruction of a beautiful work of art. It was impossible to see one more charmingly beautiful than Camille. Tall and lithe, even to exaggeration, she possessed the greatest power of causing to disappear that oblivion of nature, by an ar-

rangement of what she wore. Her shawl, the point of which trailed on the ground, exhibited on every side the full folds of her silken dress, and the full sleeves, concealing the hands she folded on her bosom, were surrounded by sleeves so elaborately made, that nothing could be either added or taken away. The head was a perfect wonder and was instinct with peculiar coquetry. It was small, and her mother, as Musset said, seemed to have made it thus to give birth to her with ease. In an oval of inexpressible grace, were eyes surmounted with arched brows, so exact that they seemed to have been painted. Veil these eyes with long lashes so black that when drooped, they seemed to cast a shadow over the cheek; define a fine, straight nose, with intellectual nostrils, half opened by an ardent aspiration toward sensual life; draw a regular mouth, the lips of which were gradually expanded over teeth white as milk, and cover the cheek with down like that on a peach, which no hand has touched, and you can form an idea of this charming girl. Her jet black hair waved naturally, disappearing at the back of her head, and in each ear hung a diamond worth four or five thousand francs.

How was it that the wild life of Camille, left this virginal and childish expression on her face? We can state such was, not why it was, the character of her face.

Camille had a wonderful portrait of herself by Vidal, the only man whose pencil could reproduce her. Since her death I had this portrait for a few days in my possession, and it was so wonderfully like that it revived circumstances which had escaped my memory.

Among the details of this chapter are some I acquired at a late day, but I write them out at once that I may not have to return to them when I begin the anecdote history of this woman.

Camille was present at every first performance, and went every evening to the theatre or the ball. When a new piece was performed they were sure to see her with three things: she was never without her lorgnette, a sack of *bon-bons*, and a bouquet of camellias. Twenty-five days in every month the camellias were white, on other days they were red. None other knew the reason of this change of colors, which I mention to attract the attention

of other persons who used to frequent the same theaters, and which they as well as I may have observed. She was never observed to have any other flowers than camellias, and for that reason Madame Bargon's florist had called her "LaDame aux Camelias," a surname she had retained. I also knew, as all here in a certain *clique* in Paris, that Camille had been the mistress of the most elegant young men—a fact that proved that they loved and were satisfied with each other. Three years afterward, however, it was said that she only lived with an old foreign duke she met at Bagnieres, who was very rich, and did all he could to make her forget her past life, which she seemed, be it said, not sorry to do.

This is the story told on the matter:

Early in 1842 she was so weak and changed that the physicians prescribed the waters of Bagnieres for her, and thither she went. Among the patients was the daughter of the duke, who not only had the same disease, but who looked like Camille, so that they might be taken for sisters. The young duchess was, however, in a third state of phthisis, and died within three days of Camille's arrival.

One morning, the duke having remained at Bagnieres, as one remains at a place where part of his heart has been buried, saw Camille on the angle of an alley.

He fancied that he saw the shade of his child pass by, and advancing to her, seized her hand. He kissed her, folded her in his arms, and without asking who she was, implored leave of her to adore the image of his dead child.

Camille was alone at Bagnieres with her *fille de chambre*, and not fearing to compromise herself, yielded to the duke's request.

At Bagnieres there were persons who knew her, and who officiously went to inform the duke of the true position of Mlle. Gautier. This was a severe blow to the old man, for then the resemblance to his daughter ceased. It was, however too late, for the young woman had become a necessity of his heart, and only a pretext for his wishing to live longer.

He did not reprove her, for he had no right to, but asked if she thought herself capable of changing her life, offering her every inducement in exchange. She consented

We must say, that from that moment, Camille, whose nature was most enthusiastic, was sick. The past appeared to her one of the principal causes of her disease, and a kind of superstition made her think God would grant her beauty and health in exchange for repentance and conversion.

The water, exercise, natural fatigue and sleep, had by the end of summer almost restored her.

The duke accompanied Camille to Paris, where he visited her as he had done at Bagnieres.

The *liaison*, the origin and cause of which none knew, caused great sensation, for the duke, hitherto known by his wealth, now became famous for his prodigality.

This was attributed to libertinage common among rich old men. All but the fact was suspected.

The sentiment of this father for Camille was so chaste, that all other than sentimental feelings would have seemed to him a kind of incest—and he had never uttered a word his own daughter could not have heard.

Far from us the idea to make our heroine aught but what she was. We will say that while she remained at Bagnieres, the promise she had made was not difficult to keep, and she kept it: but when once in Paris, it seemed to this girl, so used to a dissipated life, to balls and orgies, that even her solitude was troubled by the periodical visits of the duke, which almost killed her with ennui, while the burning breath of her past life passed both over her body and soul.

Let us add that Camille had returned more beautiful than ever, that she was twenty, and that the concealed malady continued to give her feverish desires such as are almost ever the effect of pulmonary affections.

The duke suffered greatly on the day his friends, ever anxious to discover scandal in the conduct of the young woman with whom they said he compromised himself, came to tell him the day and hour when she did not expect him, and when she received visits which were prolonged until the next day.

Camille being questioned, confessed all to the duke, advising him unreservedly not to be any longer anxious on her account, for she felt unable to keep her promise, and would no longer take advantage of the kindness by which he had surrounded her.

The duke did not see her for eight days, and then came to beg Camille to receive him again, promising to receive her as she was, and never to reproach her.

Such was the state of things three months after Camille's return, in November, 1842.

CHAPTER III.

At one o'clock on the 16th, I went to the sale. At the porte-exchange I heard the cry of the auctioneers. All the celebrities of elegant vice were there carefully but haughtily examined by a few ladies of rank, who took advantage of the sale to examine closely women whom they would never be able to meet again, and whose false pleasures they perhaps secretly envied.

Mme. the Duchess of F—— pressed against the elbow of Mlle. A——, one of the most melancholy specimens of our modern courtesans. The Marquis of T. hesitated to bid for an article which Madame D., the most elegant and best known adulteress of the day, bid for. The Duc of G——, who at Madrid is said to ruin himself at Paris, and at Paris to ruin himself at Madrid, but who, after all, does not exceed his income, while talking with Mme. M., a most spiritual talker, who knows both how to write what she says and say what she writes, exchanged confidental glances with Mme. de N., the fair promenader of the Champs Elysees, almost always dressed in rose or blue, and whose carriage was drawn by two great black horses Tony sold her for ten thousand francs; and also Mlle. R., who with her single talent realizes twice as much as the women of the world make with their dowry, and triple what others do with their amours, had, in spite of the cold, come to make some purchases, and was not the one least admired.

We might also mention the initials of many others in this room, and who were much amazed to find them together, but we are afraid to weary the reader.

Let us only say that a mad gayety pervaded all present, many of whom had known the deceased, but who seemed to have forgotten her.

They laughed loudly. The auctioneers cried loudly, the bidders, who had occupied the benches placed in front

of the articles, sought in vain to impose silence, so that they might calmly attend to their business; never was there a more noisy or varied audience.

I glided humbly around amid this sad scene, remembering that it was near the chamber of her whose articles were being sold—to pay her debts. Having come rather to examine closely than to buy, I looked at the faces of the furnishers who ordered the sale, and whose faces became radiant as often as an article produced a price they had not expected.

Honest folk! they had speculated on the prostitution of this woman, and had gained one hundred per cent. by her, yet with law documents had persecuted her last moments, and after her death, came to receive the fruits of their calculation and of their shameful credit.

How right the ancients were when they said there was one god for merchants and thieves.

Robes, shawls and gems were sold with fearful rapidity. Nothing suited me, and I waited. All at once I heard cried:

"A volume, perfectly bound, called 'Manon Lescault. Something is written on the first page. Ten francs."

"Twelve!" said a voice after a silence of a few minutes.

"Fifteen!" said I,

Why? I did not know certainly; I did so, probably, for the few lines of writing.

"Fifteen!" repeated the auctioneer.

"Thirty!" said the first bidder, as if he wished to drown all opposition.

It had become a real contest.

"Thirty-five," said I, in the same tone.

"Forty."

"Fifty."

"Sixty."

"One hundred!"

I must confess that had I wished to produce an effect, I had been perfectly successful, for at this bid there was perfect silence, and all looked at me as if they were curious to know who the gentleman was, so determined to possess the volume. It seems that the tone in which I had last spoken had satisfied my antagonist. He relinquished a contest, the only effect of which would have been to make me pay ten times more dearly for the vol-

ume, and looking at me, said gracefully, though rather late:

"I yield, sir."

No one else having spoken, the book was adjudged to me.

As I feared lest I should yield to some new whim which my enthusiasm would perhaps have sustained, but which would have been most inconvenient to my purse, I registered my name, laid down the book and left. I must have excited much curiosity among the witnesses of the scene, who asked why I paid a hundred francs for a book I could buy anywhere for twelve or fifteen francs at most.

An hour afterward I sent for my purchase.

On the first page was written with a pen, in a delicate hand, the dedication of the book. It was in the following words:

"MANON TO CAMILLE,
"HUMILITY."

It was signed Armand Duval!

What meant the word humility! Would Camille, in the opinion of M. Duval, recognize a superiority in debauchery, or in heart, over Manon? The latter was more probable, for the former was but an impertinent frankness Camille would not have consented to in spite of her opinion of herself.

I went out again, and did not think of the book until bed-time. Certainly Manon Lescault is a touching story, every detail of which is known to me. Yet, when that volume is in my hand, a sympathy ever attracts me, so that, for the hundredth time, I read the story of the heroine of the Abbe Prevost. Now, this heroine is so truthful that I seem to have known her, and in those new circumstances the kind of comparison between Camille and Manon unexpectedly induced me to read on, and my indulgence amounted to pity, and almost to love, for the poor woman from whom I inherited the volume. Manon died in a desert, it is true, but in the arms of one who loved her with all the energy of his heart, and who, having dug a grave for her; watered with his tears the spot in which he had buried the remnant of his heart; while Camille, a sinner like Manon, and perhaps converted like her, died amid a scene of complete luxury, if one could

believe what I saw, yet in the midst of the desert of the heart, more arid and pitiless than that in which Manon had been buried. Camille, in fact, as I learned from a few friends aware of her death and its circumstances, had no real consolation by her bed during the two months of her painful agony.

After Manon and Camille, my thoughts recurred to those whom I saw pass gayly to an almost invariable death.

Poor creatures! If it be a crime to love, they should at least be pitied. You pity the blind man who has never seen the light of the day; the deaf, who have never heard the symphonies of nature; the dumb, who have never been able to utter the inspiration of their hearts, but will not pity the blindness of the heart, the deafness of the soul, the mute conscience which afflict the unfortunate victim with an incapacity to distinguish good from bad, to hear God utter the pure accents of love and faith.

Hugo wrote Marion de Lorme, de Musset, *Barcerett*, and A. Dumas, Fernande. Authors and thinkers of all ages have extended to courtesans the offering of their pity. Sometimes a great man has restored them by his love and his name. If I insist on this, it is because many who will read me are already prepared to cast this book aside, and the age of the author, perhaps, contributes not a little to this fear. Let such persons undeceive themselves and go on, if this fear alone deters them.

I am more satisfied of one thing: that to a woman to whom education has not done good, God almost always opens the two pathways which led to it—grief and love. They are difficult, and those who tread them have blood-stained feet, tear their hands, but leave on the road-side all the shreds of vice, and appear before God in a nudity which evokes no blush.

Those who meet these bold voyagers should sustain them, and tell all what they have met them for. Thus they guided their steps.

It is not necessary to put two sign-posts on the road-side bearing the inscriptions to *good*, to *evil*, and to bid the voyagers choose. It is necessary to tell them of the paths which lead from the evil way to the good, and the commencement of the one road should not be too painful or seem impossible.

Christianity intervenes with the wonderful parable of the prodigal son, to advise indulgence and pardon. Jesus was full of love for those whose souls had been wounded by human passion, whose wounds he loved to bathe, preparing the balm which was to cure: He said to Magdalen, "Much shall be forgiven because of your great love." A sublime pardon, which should awaken a sublime faith. Why should we be more rigid than Christ? Why be persisting strictly in adherence to the opinions of this world, which is stern to appear strong? Why should we reject bleeding souls, with their frames filled with bad blood, that needs only a hand that is kind to heal their wounds?

To my generation I address myself, to those for whom theories, by Voltaire, no longer exist, and who see that for some years humanity is one of its loftiest aspirations. The knowledge between good and evil has been acquired, faith has been reformed, the respect for holy things restored to us; and if the world be not perfect, it is at least better than it was. The effects of all intelligent men tend to the same object, and all powerful souls have the same principle. Let us be good, young and free—sin is but vanity—and let us have the pride of virtue, and not yield to despair. Let us not despise the woman who is neither mother, wife, girl, nor sister; let us not reduce esteem to the family, indulgence to egotism. As God rejoices more for the repentance of one sinner than for a hundred just who have never sinned, let us seek to please God; it may be returned to us with usury. Let us leave in our path the alms of pardon for those whom earthly pleasures have lost, but whom Divine hope will, perhaps, save; and as good women say when they recommend one of their remedies, if it do no good, it can at least do no harm.

It must certainly seem bold in me to extract such great results from such a subject as mine, but I am one of those that think all is in little. The child is small, but contains the man; the brain is narrow, but contains thought; the eye is but a point, but embraces leagues.

CHAPTER IV.

Two days after the sale was over. It had produced 150,000 francs. The creditors took two-thirds, and the family, a sister and nephew, inherited the other third. The sister started when her business man told her she had inherited 25,000 francs. For six or seven years she had not seen her sister, who had disappeared one day, without herself or any other one, having the least information about her. She at once hurried to Paris, and those who knew Camille were surprised to see that her sister was a large, coarse countrywoman, who had never before left her village. Her fortune was at once made, and she never knew how or whence. She returned to her village much distressed at her sister's death; a feeling, however, somewhat compensated for by an investment she had made at four and a half per cent.

All these circumstances repeated in Paris, the old mother of scandal had begun to be forgotten; and I had almost forgotten these events, in which I had somewhat participated, when a new circumstance made me acquainted with all the events of Camille's life, the details of which were so touching that I resolved to record them.

The rooms, stripped of all their furniture, were to let three or four days, and one morning some one rang at my door. My servant, or rather the porter, who did duty as such, brought a card, saying the bearer wished to speak to me. I looked at the card and read: "Armand Duval." I thought where I had seen that name, and remembered the first page of Manon Lescault.

Why could the person who had given Camille this book wish to speak to me? I said, as I bade my attendant show him in. I saw a tall, pale young man, in a traveling dress, which he seemed not to have changed for some days, and to have not even taken the trouble to brush, on his arrival in Paris, for it was covered with dust.

M. Duval was much moved, and made no effort to conceal his emotions. With tears in his eyes, and in a quivering voice, he said:

"I trust, sir, you will excuse my visit and my appearance; but beside the fact that, among your people, one

pays little attention to that, I was so anxious to see you to-day that I took no time to go to my toilet, but sending thither my things, hurried after, fearing otherwise not to find you."

I asked M. Duval to sit by the fire, which, after taking a handkerchief, and covering his face for a moment, he did.

"You cannot comprehend," said he, with a sad smile, "what an unknown visitor can want with you, especially at such an hour, and weeping as I do. I am come, sir, to ask you a favor."

"What is it, sir? You may command me."

"You were present at the sale of Camille Gautier's effects?"

At the mention of her name, the young man's emotion was too great for him, and he covered his eyes.

"I must seem very ridiculous to you, sir. Please to excuse me, and believe that I will never forget your patience."

"Sir," said I, "if the service I may afford you can in any manner make you more calm, tell me, and I will be happy to serve you."

I could not refrain from sympathizing with his sorrow.

"You bought something at the sale?"

"Yes, sir, a book."

"Manon Lescault?"

"Exactly."

"You have it?"

"It is in my bed-room."

At these words Duval seemed somewhat soothed, and thanked me as if I had already done him a good service. I went into the bed-room and brought the book thence to him.

"This is it," said he, as he looked at the presentation on the first page. "This is it!" two large tears blotted the page. "Well, sir," said he, not longer seeking to conceal that he had wept, "do you attach much importance to this book?"

"Why, sir?"

"Because I would ask you to yield it to me."

"Excuse my curiosity," said I, "but did you give it to Mlle. Gautier?"

"I did."

"The book is yours, sir. Take it. I am glad that I can restore it to you."

"But," said M. Duval, "I must at least repay you what it cost you."

"Permit me to offer it to you," said I. "The price of such a volume in a sale is trifling, and I do not remember what it cost."

"You paid one hundred francs."

"True," said I, annoyed. "How did you learn that?"

"Easily enough; I expected to reach Paris in time to attend the sale, but did not do so until to-day. I wished to have something which belonged to her, and went to the auctioneer for leave to examine the list of purchases. I saw you had purchased this book, to which something of sentiment was attached by me."

As he spoke, Armand seemed so fearful that I had known Camille as he had, that I hastened to reassure him on the matter.

"I knew Mlle. Gautier merely by sight, and her death affected me only as a pretty woman's always does a young man who had met her. I wished to buy that book, but had an opponent who seemed resolved to have it. I therefore say again, sir, the book is at your service, and beg you to accept it, not as from me, but as from her. I purchased it from an auctioneer, but to you it may, perhaps, have a more estimable value—from other relations."

"Well," said M. Duval, giving me his hand and clasping mine, "I accept it and will be grateful to you as long as I live."

I had every disposition to question Armand about Camille and the presentation in the book, about his journey and anxiety to have the volume, but by doing so feared my visitor would think I refused his offer to mix in his private affairs. He perhaps saw my wish, and said:

"You read the volume?"

"All of it."

"Did you notice the two signs I wrote in it?"

"I saw at once that the poor girl to whom you gave the book was of the most strange category, for I would not believe those signs an empty compliment."

"You are right, sir; she was an angel."

He gave me a letter, which seemed to have been often read. I opened it, and read as follows:

"I have received your letter, dear Armand, and thank God that you have remained kind. My friend, I am ill with one of those diseases which never yield; but the interest you take in me lessens my sufferings very much. I, doubtless, will not live long enough to be able to clasp the hand which wrote the last kind letter I received, and which would cure me if anything could. I will see you no more, for I am very near death, and hundreds of leagues separate us. My poor friend, the Camille you used to know is much changed, and, perhaps, it is best that you should not see her again.

"You ask me if I forgive you? With all my heart, for the evil you did me was but a proof of your love. I have been a month in bed, and attach so much importance to your esteem that I every day write in the journal of my life that I have kept since we parted, and will keep as long as my strength lasts.

"If the interest you profess to take in me be real, immediately on your return see Sophie Duprat. She will give you my journal, in which you will find the reason and excuse for what has passed between us. Sophie has been kind, and we have often spoken of you. She was here when your last letter came, and we wept when we read it.

"Had I not heard from you, she intended to have given you these papers on your return from France. Do not be grateful to me, for this daily return to the happiest days of my life does me much good; and if you find in reading it any excuse for the past, I find perpetual consolation.

"I would leave you something to remind you of me, but all has been seized, and nothing belongs to me.

"So you see, my friend, I am dying; and here in my bed-room, I can hear the steps of the watchman placed by my creditors to see that nothing is taken away. If I do not die I shall have nothing. I hope they will not sell out until all is over.

"How pitiless these men are! No, I am wrong; how inflexible God is. Well my beloved, you will come to the sale, and buy something; for if I set anything aside for you, they might accuse me of interfering with articles seized.

"The life I leave is sad.

"How kind it would be in God to permit me to see you before I die. In all probability, my friend, adieu. Forgive me if I write no more, for those who undertake to cure me exhaust me by blood-letting, and my hand is powerless. "CAMILLE GAUTIER."

The last words were almost illegible. I gave the letter to Armand, who doubtless repeated it in imagination. Lost in revery, he looked sometime at it before he opened his lips.

"When I think," said he, "that she died without my being able to see her, and that I shall see her no more; that she did for me what a sister could not, I cannot pardon myself for having thus let her die of love. Dead—alone! writing and thinking thus, poor, dear Camille.!"

Giving full vent to his tears, Armand offered me his hand, and said:

"They would call me a fine young fellow if any one saw me thus weep for my sister. None know, though, how cruel I was to this woman; how I made her suffer, and how good and resigned she was. I thought pardon was not for me, and now I feel unworthy of the pardon she has granted to me. I would give ten years of my life for an hour at her feet."

It is difficult to console a sorrow one is ignorant of, yet I sympatized with the young man. He made me the confidant of his love so frankly that I fancied my words would not be unwelcome, and said:

"Have you no relations? No friends? Hope. See them. They will console and pity you."

"True," said he, rising, and striding down the room. "I annoy you. Excuse me, but I forgot that my sorrow did not concern you, and that I annoy and trouble you."

"You mistake the meaning of the words. I am at your service, but regret that I cannot calm your chagrin. If my society, and that of my friends interest you; if you need anything, believe me, I shall be delighted to serve you."

"Excuse my sensitiveness, it is exaggerated by sorrow. Let me remain a few moments longer to dry my eyes, that loungers in the street may not fancy me a great crying baby. You have by giving me the book, done me a favor I can never repay."

"By giving me your friendship," said I "and telling me the cause of your sorrow, you may. By talking of your troubles, you may also console them."

"You are right, but to-day I need tears, and would utter meaningless words. Some day I will tell you my story and then you will see that I have reason to regret the poor girl," said he, again drying his eyes and looking at himself in the glass. "Tell me that you do not think me a fool, and give me leave to visit you."

I could scarcely refrain from embracing the young man. His eyes began to be filled with tears, which he saw I noticed. Looking away, I said:

"Well, take courage."

"Adieu," said he.

Making great efforts not to weep, he fled from rather than left me. I lifted up the window curtain and saw him enter the cabriolet, which waited at my door. When in it, he put his handkerchief to his face, and wept.

CHAPTER. V.

Some time passed before I received any news of Armand, but I had often heard of Camille. I do not know that you have observed it, but it seems to me that the name of a person unknown to you, or at least indifferent, pronounced if but only once before you, has the effect of so grouping details around it, that instantly every friend seems to speak of things they never were heard to mention before. You will see then that this person always interested you, and you will also see that she has often influenced your life unnoticed, and what you hear possesses a real coincidence and affinity with the events of your own existence. This was not exactly the case between Camille and myself, since I had seen her, met her, and known her by name and fame. Since the sale, however, her name was so constantly in my ears, and since the interview described in the last chapter the theme of so great a sorrow, that my amazement increased, and with it my curiosity. The result was that I approached my friends, to whom I had never spoken of Camille, with the inquiry:

"Did you ever hear of a woman named Camille Gautier?"

"The lady with the camellias?"

"Yes."

"Often."

The word "often" was frequently followed by an inexplicable but most intelligible smile.

"Well," continued I, "who was she?"

"A fine woman."

"Is that all?"

"Yes; she had more mind, perhaps more heart, than most of her kind."

And you know nothing more of her?"

"Nothing but that they say she ruined the Baron de G——"

"That's all?"

"She was the mistress of the old Duke de——"

"Was she really his mistress?"

"They say so——at all events he gave her much money."

I always heard the same general details, but was curious to learn about her liaison with Armand. Meeting once one of those persons who know all about such women, I said:

"Did you know Camille Gautier?"

I had the usual reply.

"What was she?"

"A fine and good woman. Her death pained me much."

"Had she a lover named Duval?"

"Tall and fair?"

"Yes."

"True."

"What was he?"

"A young man who spent with her the little he had, and was forced to leave her. They say he has been mad."

"And she?"

"They say she loved him, too, as much as such women can love. They should not be asked for more than they can bestow?"

"What has become of Armand?"

"It is not known. We had seen but little of him. He remained four or five months with Camille in the country, and when she returned to town he was gone."

"And you have not seen him since?"

"Never."

Nor had I, and had begun to ask if, when he came to my house, the recent death of Camille had not exaggerated his old love, and consequently his grief, and that with her death he had exaggerated the promise he had made.

This supposition would have been natural enough to another, but the accents of Armand's despair were so natural that, passing from one extreme to another, I fancied that his sorrow was changed into disease, and that I would hear from him if he were not sick or dead.

In spite of myself I became interested in the fate of the young man. It may be there was something of egotism in this feeling, and I caught a glimpse of some touching story of the heart, to become acquainted with which mingled much with my anxiety about Armand.

As M. Duval did not come to see me, I resolved to find him. I had no trouble in finding a pretext; but, unfortunately, none whom I asked could give me any information. I went to the rue d'Antin. The portress of Camille perhaps knew of him. There was a new person there who was as ignorant as I was. I asked where Mlle. had been buried, and they told me at Mont Martre.

It was April. The weather was fine, and the graves no longer wore the sad aspect winter confers upon them. I went to the cemetery, and said, by the very appearance of Camille's grave I can see if Armand's love lasts, and perhaps I may hear of him. I went to the keeper's house, and asked if, on the 22d of February, a woman named Camille had been buried at Mont Martre.

The man looked at the register, in which all interments are recorded, and told me that at noon on that day a woman of that name had been buried.

I asked him to show me the tomb, for without a cicerone there was no way to recognize, in that city of the dead, one of the habitations of the dead, arranged like the houses of a street. The keeper called a gardener, to whom he gave the needful order, and who interrupted him by saying:

"I know—I know."

"Ah!" said he to me, "it is easily found."

"How?"

"Because it has flowers on it different from the others."

"Do you take care of them?"

"Yes, sir, and I wish all the friends of the dead were

as kind to me as the young man who recommended that to me."

The gardener soon said to me:

"Here we are."

There was before us a bed of flowers, and one would never have thought of a grave, had not a white stone and name appeared. The stone was upright, and an iron railing enclosed the purchased ground, which was covered with camellias.

"What say you of this?" asked my guide.

"It is very beautiful."

"And whenever a camellia begins to fade I am ordered to renew it."

"By whom?"

"A tall young man, who wept much the first time he came here—an old lover of the deceased. She was rather gay, they say, but very beautiful. Did you know her, sir?"

"Yes."

"As the other did?" said the gardener, with a malicious smile.

"No, I never spoke to her."

"And you come hither! It is kind, for those who visit them rarely see their graves."

"None come?"

"Except the young man, who was here once."

"And he has not come again?"

"No, but he will on his return."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No, but I think he is with the sister of Mlle. Gautier."

"What has he gone for?"

"To ask leave to exhume the body and bury it elsewhere."

"Why does he wish this?"

"You know, sir, that people have notions about the dead. We see this every day. The ground is purchased but for five years, and the young man wishes a perpetuity and a larger plot. In the addition it will be the easier."

"What do you call the addition?"

"The new field on the left, now for sale. Were the cemetery always as it is now, there would not be one like it in the world. Before then, though, much—much must be done."

"What mean you?"

"People are stupidly proud. Poor Mlle. Gautier led, excuse the phrase, a bad life; but now the poor girl is dead, those who would not notice her while she was alive, insist on our watering the grave every day. When the relations of those buried by her side learned who she was, they took it into their heads to oppose her being put here, and said that a place should be set aside for such women, as for the poor. Was the like ever heard of? I took them up roundly though. Rich men who came three or four times to visit their dead and bring their flowers—see what flowers—who write on their tombs tears they never shed, and who make outcries in the vicinity. You may believe me, sir, that though I never saw her I know all about her. She is my favorite subject, for we grow to love the dead, sir, having scarcely time to think of any one else."

I looked at the man, and some of my readers will understand the emotion he expressed so well that I need not explain it. He saw this and continued:

"They tell me there were people who became famous on her account and were ruined, but that she had lovers who adored her. Well, when I think that not one of them will buy a flower for her, it is curious and sad. She, though, has no cause of complaint, for she has her tomb. We have here, however, poor girls of the same sort and age, who are thrown into common graves, and it makes me weep when I see coarse people throw the earth on their bodies, and that when once dead they are thought of by none. I have a tall girl of twenty, and when I am called hither by the funeral of one of her age I think of her, whether I come to bury a great lady or a street-walker.

"But my chatterings must annoy you, and you did not come hither to hear them. I was told to take you to the grave. Here it is. Can I be useful in any way?"

"Do you know the address of M. Armand Duval?" asked I.

"Yes, in —— street. I went thither for the price of the flowers you see."

"Thank you."

I cast one look at the flower-strewn tomb, the depth of which I wished to sound, to see what change death had wrought, and left sadly.

"Does Monsieur wish to see M. Duval?" asked the gardener.

"Yes."

"I am sure he has not returned, or I would have seen him."

"You are sure, then, he has not forgotten Camille?"

"Yes, and that his wish to change her grave results from a wish to see her again."

"How?"

"The first thing he said was: 'How could I see her again?' This could be by changing the tomb, and I told him of all the formalities necessary to change a body from one tomb to another; it must be identified, and only the family of the deceased can give authority for this operation, which must be presided over by the commissaire of police. To obtain her consent for this M. Duval went to the sister of Mlle. Gautier, and, on his return, his first visit will be hither."

We were at the gate, and I thanked the gardener, placing a few coins in his hands, and went to the address he had given.

Armand had not returned. I left a message for him to see me on his return, and to tell him where he might be met.

The next morning I received a letter from M. Duval, who informed me of his return, and begged me to come to his house, as being worn out with fatigue, it was impossible for him to see me.

CHAPTER VI.

I found him in bed. When he saw me he gave me his burning hand.

"You have fever," I said.

"It is only the effects of a rapid journey."

"You are coming from seeing Camille's sister?"

"Yes. Who told you?"

"I know. You succeeded?"

"Yes. But who told you of my journey and of its object?"

"The gardener of the cemetery."

"You saw the tomb?"

I could scarcely reply, so fully did the tones of his voice tell me that the speaker continued the victim of the emotion I had witnessed, and that his memory and the words of others hurried him, contrary to his wishes, to this subject.

I bowed assent.

"He takes good care of it?"

"Yes."

Two large tears rolled down the invalid's cheek, and to hide them he turned away. I pretended not to see them, and said:

"You have been absent three weeks."

Passing his hand over his face, he said:

"Exactly that time."

"Was your journey long?"

"I have not been traveling all the time, but have been sick, or would have soon returned. I had a fever which confined me to my rooms."

"And you returned before you were cured?"

"Had I remained eight days longer in bed I would have died."

"Now, though, you must take care of yourself, your friends will come to see you. Permit me to call myself the first."

"I will get up in two hours."

"How imprudent!"

"I must."

"What have you so important to do?"

"I must go to see the commissaire of police."

"Why? I will do so for you. Your visit will make you more unwell."

"It alone can cure me; I must see her. Since I heard of her death, and especially since I saw her tomb, I cannot sleep. I must satisfy myself, and see what God has done with her I loved so. Perhaps disgust at the spectacle will replace the despair of memory. You will accompany me?"

"What did her sister say?"

"Nothing. She seemed surprised that a stranger wished to buy a grave for Camille, and at once gave the consent I asked for."

"Listen to me. Do not move the body until you are well."

"I am getting better. Besides, I would go mad, if I did not go on with the discharge of what has become a necessity to my grief. I cannot be calm until I have seen my Camille. Fever, perhaps, possesses me—a dream of my sleepless nights—a madness pursues me; but even if, like M. de Rance, *I* become a Trappist, I must see her."

"I can understand that," said I to Armand. "Have you seen Julia Dupont?"

"Yes, on the day of my first return."

"Did you get the papers Camille laid on the shelf?"

"Here they are."

Armand took a roll of paper from his pillow and replaced it.

"I know their contents by heart," said he. "For three years I have read them ten times a day. You, at some future time, shall also read them, when I can explain to you how much love this confession conceals. I have now a favor to ask you."

"What?"

"Have you a carriage here?"

"Yes."

"Will you take my passport and go to the *poste restante* to see if there be any letters for me? My father and sister were to direct to Paris, and I set out in such haste that I did not inquire. On our return we will go together to inform the authorities of the removal."

Armand gave me his passport, and I went to Rue 99 Rousseau.

There were two letters which I brought him, and on my return I found him dressed and ready to go.

"Thanks," said he. "Yes, they must be from my father and sister, who could not understand my long absence."

He opened, and glanced at, rather than read the letters, which were each written on four sides, and having folded them, said:

"Let us go; I will reply to-morrow."

We went to the authorities, to whom Armand gave the document required from Camille's sister.

At nine o'clock the next day, after a night which appeared long indeed to him, I saw Armand, who was horribly pale, but calm.

He smiled, and gave me his hand. The lights had burned out.

Before going, Armand took a thick letter, addressed to his father, which had doubtless occupied his sleepless hours.

In half an hour we came to Mont Martre.

The officials waited for us, and we went slowly toward Camille's tomb—an officer first and Armand and I following.

From time to time I felt the arm of my companion quiver convulsively. I would then look at him, and he seemed to understand me, for he smiled. From the time, however, we left the house we did not exchange a word.

When near the tomb, Armand paused to wipe his face, over which were drops of perspiration. I took advantage of this pause to breathe, for even I felt as if my heart was in a vise.

What is the origin of the painful pleasure we take in spectacles of this kind? When we came to the tomb, the gardener had taken away all the flowers, the grating was removed, and two men were picking the earth.

Armand leaned against a tree and looked on, his whole existence being apparently concentrated in his eyes.

Suddenly the picks grated as against stone, and Armand glanced at me as if he was electrified—clasping my hand so as to hurt it.

A grave-digger took a shovel and cleared out the grave, and, when he came to the stones, took them out, one by one, and threw them away.

I watched Armand, for I feared lest the violent emotions he was undergoing should crush him. He yet looked on, however, his eyes being fixed in insanity, and a faint quivering of his cheeks alone showing any nervousness.

Of myself, I can only say that I regretted having come.

When the coffin was bare, the officer told the grave-diggers to open it. They obeyed. The coffin was of oak, and they began to tear open the outer covering. The dampness of the ground had rusted the hinges, and it was opened without difficulty.

"My God—my God!" murmured Armand.

Even the grave-diggers shrank back. A white shroud covered the body, exhibiting something of its sinuosities. One portion of the pall was eaten away, and suffered one foot to be seen.

I felt sick, and even now it seems almost impossible for the scene to have occurred.

"Be quick!" said the policeman.

Then one of the men put out his hand and rudely uncovered the face of Camille. It was horrible to see and tell of. The eyes were but holes, the lips had disappeared, and the teeth hung against each other. The long hair hung in green ringlets, yet I could recognize the fresh, rosy face I had so often seen.

Armand could not look away, but placed his handkerchief to his lips and bit it. A circle of iron seemed to clasp my brow, a veil came over my eyes, and I could with difficulty open a smelling-bottle I chanced to have brought with me. I heard the officer say to Mr. Duval:

"Do you know her?"

"Yes," said the young man, hoarsely.

The grave-diggers pulled the shroud again over the face of the corpse, covered it up, and taking hold of the ends, went toward the place designated.

Armand did not move. His eyes were riveted to the empty grave. He was as pale as the corpse we had seen, and seemed petrified. I saw what was about to happen. I drew near the policeman, and said, pointing to Armand:

"Is his presence any longer necessary?"

"No," said he; "and I advise you to take him away, for he seems sick."

"Come," said I to Armand, taking him by the arm.

"What?" said he, looking at me as if he had not known me.

"It is all over! Come, you are pale and cold, such emotions will kill you."

"You are right," said he, "let us go."

He did not move, however. I took him by the arm and sought to lead him away. He yielded as a child would have done, but murmured:

"Did you see her eyes?"

He looked back as if to recall a vision.

His gait, however, trembled, and he seemed to advance only by shocks—his hands were cold and his whole frame seemed to suffer from nervousness.

I spoke to him and he did not answer.

At the gate we fortunately met a carriage, and he had no sooner entered it than he had a real nervous attack.

I gave him the bottle I had used, and when he reached his house he was not yet well, and with the assistance of a servant I put him to bed. I then went for a physician, to whom I told what had passed, and who came at once.

The patient's face was flushed, he was delirious, and uttered disconnected words, amid which Camille's name often occurred.

"Well?" said I to the doctor, when he had seen him.

"He has a brain fever, and if he is lucky he will get well. Physical malady will, however, destroy the mental disease, and in a month he will be cured of one or the other."

CHAPTER VII.

Maladies like Armand's have the advantage of being terminated quickly, either by death or recovery.

Within a fortnight Armand was convalescent, and we were as intimate as possible. I had scarcely left his room while he was sick.

Spring had strewn its flowers, leaves, and birds' songs profusely, and the windows of my friend opened on a garden, the perfumes of which ascended to it. The physician had given him permission to leave his bed, and we often talked together at the hours—from noon till two—when the sun is warmest.

I took care not to refer to Camille, lest I should revive a sad memory, lulled to sleep by his illness. He, however, seemed to love to talk of her, often with tears in his eyes, but with a smile which assured me of the state of his soul.

Though long sick he had obstinately refused to inform his family of his sickness, and when cured his father was ignorant that he had been ill. Once we sat later than usual at the window; the weather had been magnificent and the sun sank in a twilight of brilliant gold. Though in Paris, the verdure which surrounded, seemed to isolate us from the rest of the world, and nothing but the wheels of passing carriages interrupted our conversation.

"It is," said Armand, "almost the season of the day and hour when I first met Camille."

I was silent, and again speaking to me he said: "I must tell you a story which, though incredible, may yet enable you to make an interesting book."

I told him he must tell me this at some other day, but that he was not then strong enough to do so.

"The evening is warm; I have eaten my dinner; I have no fever," said he, "and I will tell you all."

"If you insist I must listen."

I have scarcely changed a line of the story he told me, which is as follows:

I had returned to Paris on just such an evening as this, with one of my country friends, Gaston, whom I had visited, and not knowing what to do, we went to the Varieties.

Between the acts we went out, and in the corridor my friend spoke to a woman.

"Who is she?' asked I.

He replied, "Camille Gautier."

"She seems much changed," said I, with an emotion you will soon understand, for I did not know her.

"She has been ill, and will not last long." I remember these words as if I heard them but yesterday.

You must know, my friend, that for two years the sight of that girl has given me great uneasiness.

I knew not why, but my heart beat violently. One of my friends, who studies the occult sciences, would call this affinity of the fluids, and see an intimation that I was to love Camille. I foresaw it.

The first time I saw her she was near the Bourse. An open calash waited, and a woman in white had just left it, followed by a murmur of admiration. I stood riveted to the spot from the moment she entered a shop until she left it. I saw her make her purchases, and though I might, did not enter after her. I did not know why I was so interested, and left lest she might suppose why I watched her. I never expected to see her again.

She was elegantly dressed in a robe of muslin. Her Indian shawl was richly embroidered, and her straw hat and solitary bracelet were just becoming fashionable. She drove away, and one of the bystanders, in reply to a question, said: "It is Mlle. Gautier." I dared ask no more, and left.

The recollection of this vision, for such it was, did not

like others, pass away, but I sought for her everywhere; and a few days after, at a great performance of the Opera Comique, saw her in one of the front boxes. The person with me also did, for he said:

"Look at that pretty woman."

Camille just then saw my friend, and smiled at him.

"I will," said he, "say good evening to her, and soon be back."

I could but congratulate him on his acquaintance. He asked me if I was smitten with her; but when I said "no," but did not promise not to be if I knew her, he said:

"Come and I will introduce you."

"Ask her leave."

It is useless to talk thus with her," said he.

What he said annoyed me, for I feared to learn the certainty that Camille did not deserve what I felt towards her.

There is one of Alphonse Karr's books called "Am Rauchen," a man who follows, day and night, a very elegant woman, of whom at first sight he becomes enamored. To be permitted to kiss her hand he feels sustained in all undertakings. While asking what he could do to gain her, she stops at the corner of the street and asks him to accompany her home. He turns aside and goes sadly away.

I recalled this story, and suffered almost as much as Karr's hero did. Yet I wished him to ask leave to present me, and I walked up and down the corridors, fancying that she would see me, and that I would read assent in her countenance. While thinking what I should say, my friend joined me and said:

"She awaits you."

"Is she alone?" asked I.

"Except a lady."

"No men?"

"None."

We went to the door of the theater.

"This is not the way," said I.

"We must get some bonbons—she asked for them."

We went to a confectioner's near, and feeling as if I could have purchased the shop, looked around me when my friend said:

"A pound of *raisins glaces.*"

"Does she like them?"

"She takes none other."

"Now," said he, "do you know to whom I am about to introduce you? Do not fancy her a duchess, for she is merely a kept woman. Say, then, anything you please."

"Very well," said I, almost cured of my passion.

Camille was laughing loudly when I came in. I would have preferred her being sad.

My friend introduced me, and Camille said, "where are my *bonbons?*"

Here I dropped my eyes, as she looked at me.

She whispered a few words to her neighbor, as they both laughed. I was beyond all doubt the cause of this laugh, for at that time I had a little sentimental female at whose epistles and letters I used to smile. I felt for five minutes that, perhaps, I did her an injustice, and loved her more than I have ever done.

Camille ate her confectionery, and paid no attention to me. My introducer, however, would not suffer me to occupy so insignificant a position.

"Camille," said he, "do not be satisfied if M. Duval says nothing to you. Believe that you have perfectly amazed him."

"I think he accompanied you because you did not wish to come alone."

"If that had been so," said I, "Ernest would not have had to wait for me to ask for an introduction."

All who have ever met women of Camille's rank know how they like to pique and toy with persons they meet for the first time. This is certainly a revenge they take for the humiliations they are often forced to submit to.

To reply to them, therefore, one needs to be used to them. I therefore arose, and said, with a somewhat angry voice:

"If, Mademoiselle, you think thus of me, I have only to ask you to excuse me, and, while I bid adieu, to say that my impertinence will not be renewed.

I bowed and left, but had no sooner closed the door than I heard a third laugh, and went back to my place.

Some one tapped me on the shoulder, and, looking back, I saw Ernest; "why did you go?" said he, "they think you are mad."

I said, "what did Camille say when I left?"

"That she never saw anything so odd. Do not, how-

over, think yourself beaten on that account; but never again talk seriously to women of that kind—they do not know what politeness is; but, like dogs, think perfume offensive, and rush in the gutter to avoid its savor. I do not, however, despair of some day seeing you in her box."

Just then the curtain was raised, and my friend was silent. It is impossible for me to tell you what was performed, but only that from time to time I looked up, and that new faces perpetually succeeded each other.

I could not, however, but think of Camille, and a new sentiment took possession of me. I remembered her insult, and I could not but say, if she ever became mine, I would make her atone for it. Before the opera was over. Camille and her friends left the box. I, too, was leaving my seat.

"Are you going?" said Ernest.

"Yes."

"Why?"

Just then he saw that the box was empty.

"Go," said he, "and the next time good or better luck to you."

I left, and on the stairway I heard the rustling of dresses and the sound of voices. I stood aside and saw two women and young men pass.

At the door was a servant, to whom Camille said:

"Tell the driver to wait for us at the *Cafe Anglais*. We will walk thither."

A few moments later I saw Camille at one of the windows of this great establishment. She was playing with the leaves of one of the flowers of her bouquet.

Several men leaned over her shoulder in conversation. I went to the Maison d'Or, whence I could see all, and saw that at one o'clock Camille and her friends got into their carriage. I followed her in a cabriolet to *Rue d'Antin*, No. 9.

Camille entered alone, and this chance, for such it was, made me very happy.

Thenceforth I never saw her in public places.

About that time, though I asked Gaston about her, who told me that she had a pulmonary disease and could not be cured. They said she would not leave her bed again.

Our hearts are strange things. I, however, rejoiced at her illness.

I went first every day to ask for her; then left my name, and finally my card. I thus heard of her recovery and departure for Bagnieres.

Thus time rolled by, and the impression she made was being effaced from my mind, so that one day she passed me in the corridor of the Varieties, and I did not know her.

She was veiled, it is true, but two years after no veil would have hidden her from me, for I would have discovered her presence. When I knew it was she my heart beat so that all that had intervened since we left passed away like smoke.

CHAPTER VIII.

Yet, continued Armand, after a pause, though I knew I still loved, I felt I was stronger, and was anxious to show her that I was her superior. What excuses the heart feigns to accomplish what it wishes. I could not restrain myself in the corridor, but resumed my place in the orchestra, and looked around the boxes to see where she was. She was alone—changed as I have told you—and the careless smile on her lips was gone, for she had yet suffered, and, though April had come, was clad as if it were December. She looked at me for a moment, appealed to her glass, and a smile, the charming salutation of women, played on her lips, as if to invite the recognition she expected from me. I did not reply, however, as if in revenge for her having appeared to forget me when she did not. She fancied she was mistaken, and looked away until the curtain arose. I have often seen her at the play, but never saw her pay the least attention to the performance. Nor did I care a great deal for the play, and paid attention to her all the time, however, striving that she should not see that I did so. I saw her exchange glances with the person in the opposite box, and I saw the latter was a person I knew. She was an old frequenter of the opera, who had attempted to set, and had failed, and relying on her

acquaintance of Paris, had gone into business as a milliner. I saw that she could enable me to meet with Camille, and I took occasion when she looked toward me to say good-evening. What I foresaw happened, for she called me to her box. Prudence Duverney was the happy name of the milliner. She was a woman of forty, and one of those persons with whom no great diplomacy was needed to make her tell all she knew, especially when what I wished to know was so simple. I took advantage of the time when she began her telegraphing to her friend to say:

"Whom are you thus looking at?"

She replied: "Camille Gautier."

"Do you know her?"

"I am her milliner and her neighbor."

"You live in Rue d'Antin?"

"No 7. Her dressing window is opposite to mine.

"They say she is a charming person."

"You do not know her!"

"No; I wish I did."

"Shall I call her to our box?"

"No. I had rather you should introduce me to her."

"At her house?"

"Yes."

"It is more difficult."

"Why?"

"She is under the charge of a very jealous old man."

"*Under the charge!* That is a charming phrase."

"Yes, to be her lover would annoy the old man very much."

Prudence then told how she had made the acquaintance of the Duke at Bagnieres.

"That is the reason, then, that she is here alone?"

"Yes."

"But who will take her home?"

"The old man."

"He will come for her, then?"

"Directly."

"Who will escort you?"

"No one."

"Accept me."

"But you are with a friend?"

"We both are at your disposal."

"Who is your friend?"

"A pleasant, agreeable fellow, who will be delighted to make your acquaintance."

"Well, we will leave after this piece: the other I know."

"So be it. I will tell my friend."

"Ah!" said [illegible], just as I left; "there is the Duke."

I looked at him.

A man of about seventy sat behind the young woman, and handed her a paper of confectionery, which she took with a smile; she then extended the paper toward Prudence in a manner which might be translated by, "Will you take some?"

Prudence said no, and Camille at once began to talk to the Duke.

The stories of these details seem childish, but all that relates to Camille is so impressed on my memory that to-day I cannot refrain from telling it. I went to tell Gaston of the arrangement I had made, and on his consenting we left our stalls to go to Prudence's box.

When we came to the door of the orchestra, we were forced to pause, that Camille and the Duke, who were going, might pass us.

I would have given ten years of my life to have been in the old man's place. When on the Boulevard, putting her in a phaeton, he took the reins himself and drove off in a rapid trot. We went into Prudence's box. When the play was over we went in a hackney coach to No. 7 d'Antin street, and when at the door, Prudence asked us to enter her ware-rooms, of which she seemed proud, and which we had never seen; I seemed gradually approaching Camille, and she soon became the theme of conversation.

"Is the old Duke with your neighbor?" asked I.

"No," said Prudence, "she is alone."

"She must suffer terribly from *ennui*."

"We pass almost all our evenings together, for when she returns she calls me. She never goes to bed before two; she cannot sleep sooner."

"Why?"

"Because her lungs are diseased and she almost always has fever."

"Has she no lover?"

"I never see any one when I go. I will not, however, swear for aught—and say that nobody comes after I have

gone. Often I see at her house in the evening a Count N., who fancies that he advances his interests by visits at eleven o'clock—and sending her as many jewels as she wishes. She does not like him though—and as he is very rich it is strange. I often say to her: 'He is just the man you need.' Ordinarily she listens kindly enough, but on such occasions, she turns her back on me, and says he is too stupid. That may be the case, I confess, yet she would secure her position, for the old Duke may die any day. Old men are selfish, and his family perpetually reproach him with his fondness for Camille, and he thus has two capital reasons for leaving her nothing. When I talk to her so, she says there is time enough for the Count when the Duke dies.

"This is an odd way of living," said Prudence," and I would soon pack the old man off. He is stupid; he calls her his daughter, and sticks to her as if she were really his child. I am sure, at this very moment, one of his servants is prowling about and watching her door."

Gaston went to the piano and played a waltz. Poor girl! I did not know all this, but for some time she had looked less gay than usual.

"Ah!" said Prudence, listening.

Gaston paused, and Prudence said:

"She is calling me."

We listened. A voice called Prudence, who said:

"Come, gentlemen, away with you."

"Is that the way you understand hospitality, to put us out of the house when you choose?"

"Why should we go?" said I.

"Because I am going to see Camille."

"We will wait here."

"Impossible!"

"We will go with you."

"That is utterly out of the question."

"I know Camille," said Gaston, "and can visit her."

"But Armand does not."

"I will introduce him."

"Impossible!"

We heard the voice of Camille again, and Gaston and I followed Prudence to the dressing-room. Throwing open the window, Prudence asked her what she wanted, and was told to come over at once.

"Why?"

"Count N. is here yet, and annoys me to death."

"I cannot come now."

"Why?"

"There are two young men here who won't go."

"Tell them you must leave them."

"I have."

"Leave them at your house, and they will then go."

"After having put everything upside down."

"What do they want?"

"To see you."

"What are their names?"

"You know one, Gaston R——."

"Yes, I know him. Who is the other?"

"Armand Duval."

"No. Bring him over, though, anything is better than the Count. Come quickly."

The two windows were closed.

Camille had remembered my face but not my name. A recollection would have been more flattering to me.

"I knew," said Gaston, "that she would be delighted to see you."

"That is not the phrase," said Prudence, putting on her shawl. "She receives you to get rid of the Count. Try to be more pleasant than he, or Camille will quarrel with you."

We went down stairs with Prudence.

I trembled, for I was about to take a step that would have much influence on my life, and was more nervous than I had been on the night of my introduction at the Opera Comique. A few notes of the piano reached us. Prudence rang and the piano stopped. A person who seemed to be rather a companion than a servant answered. We went from the parlor into the boudoir, which then was as when you saw it. A young man leaned against the chimney. Camille sat at the piano, and her fingers strayed over the keys, commencing airs she did not conclude. The scene betokened *ennui*, the result of the triviality age of the man and the lady's weariness of such a lugubrious personage. When she heard Prudence's voice, Camille arose, and having bidden Madame Duverney welcome, said to us:

"Come in, gentlemen, I am glad to see you."

CHAPTER IX.

"Good evening, my dear Gaston," said Camille to my companion; "I am glad to see you. Why did you not come to my box at the Varieties?"

"I was afraid of intruding."

"Friends"—and Camille laid a stress on the word, as if she wished to make those present understand that Gaston was but a friend, by the cavalier manner she treated him—"never intrude."

"Then suffer me to introduce to you M. Armand Duval."

"I have already authorized Prudence to do so."

"But, madame," said I, seeking to make my voice as pleasant as possible, "I have already had that honor."

Camille's charming eyes seemed to look back into her memory, but she either forgot or seemed not to remember me.

"Madame," said I, "then I am grateful to you for having forgotten my first introduction, for I must have seemed very ridiculous to you. It was two years ago, at the Opera Comique, I was with Ernest de R——."

"Ah! I remember," said she, with a smile. "It was not you, though, who were ridiculous, but I who were saucy—as I yet am sometimes. You, however, forgave me, sir?"

She gave me her hand, which I kissed.

"You must know I have a whim for embarrassing people I see for the first time. The doctors tell me that it is because I am nervous, and always in pain."

"But you seem well."

"Ah! I have been very sick."

"I know it."

"Who told you?"

"Every one is aware of it. I frequently came to ask after you, and was pleased to hear that you were convalescent."

"Are you the young man who came every day to ask after me, and who would never leave his name?"

"It was I."

"Then you are more than indulgent—you are generous. You, Count, would not have acted thus," said she, turning to N——, after casting on me one of those looks with which women complete their opinion of men.

"I have but an acquaintance of two months with you."

"M. Duval had known me but five minutes. You talk foolishly!"

Women are pitiless to persons they do not love. The Count's face flushed, and he bit his lips. I really pitied him, for he seemed as much in love as I was, and Camille's plain frankness, especially in the presence of two strangers, must have made him very unhappy.

"You were at the piano when we came," said I, for the purpose of changing the conversation; "will you not treat me as an old acquaintance, and return to it?"

"Oh!" said she, throwing herself on the sofa, and making a gesture for us to be seated; "Gaston knows what kind of thing my music is—good enough when I am alone with the Count, but I cannot think of inflicting it on you."

"Thus you favor me," said the Count, with a smile he tried to make ironical.

"You should not refer to it," said Camille; "it is the only favor I have for you."

The poor fellow could not say a word, and looked at her in the most imploring manner.

"Tell me, Prudence, did you do what I requested you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you can tell me of it by-and-by. Do not go without doing so."

"We certainly intrude," said I; "and now, that I have been introduced a second time, Gaston and I will go."

"By no means. I do not refer to you, whom I wish to remain."

The Count looked at an elegant watch, and said:

"It is time for me to go to the club."

Camille was silent.

The Count approached her, and said:

"Adieu, madame."

Camille arose, and said:

"Adieu, Count. You go early."

"I fear I am *de trop*."

"Not more so to-day than at other times. When shall I see you again?"

"When you will permit me to come."

"Adieu, then."

This, I must confess, was cruel. The count was well educated, and had a good character. He kissed Camille's hand, bowed to us, and left. As he crossed the door, he looked at Prudence, who shrugged her shoulders as if to say: "Well I did my best."

"Nanine," said Camille, "light the Count to the door."

We soon heard it open and close.

"At last," said Camille, "he is gone. He always makes me nervous."

"My dear child, you are too stern to the Count, who is so kind to you. There lies on the mantel a watch he gave you, which cost a thousand crowns at the least."

Here Madame Duverney took up the watch and began to play with it, looking most covetously the while.

"My child," said Camille, "when I compare what he gives and what he says, I think I charge too little for his visits."

"He loves you."

"If I had to listen to all who love me, I would have no time for aught else."

She passed her fingers over the keys of the piano, and turning to us, said:

"Will you take anything? I will take some punc and, if we sup, I will take a piece of chicken."

"Well," said Gaston, "let us go somewhere to sup

"No, we will sup here."

She rang, and Nanine appeared.

"Send out for supper."

"For what?"

"What you please, only be quick with it."

Nanine left.

"We will sup," said Camille, springing up like a chil "How stupid that Count is!"

The more I saw of her the more enchanted I became. Her very thinness became a grace. I was lost in contemplation of her. What passed in my mind would be difficult to explain, for I was full of indulgence for her life,

and of admiration for her beauty. Her disinterestedness in refusing a young, elegant and rich man, ready to ruin himself for her, excused all her faults in my mind.

There was something of candor in her. She was evidently in the virginity of vice. Her bold step, her lithe form, her expanded nostrils, her large eyes faintly veined on the lids, denoted one of those temperaments which spread an atmosphere around them, like one of those oriental flacons which, however tightly sealed, suffer the perfume to escape.

Whether from constitution or from disease, from time to time there passed across her eyes flashes of passion which would have seemed a revelation to one she loved; but those whom she loved, and who loved her, were now, neither the one nor the other, to be found.

In fine, in this woman was a virgin, whom an accident had converted into a courtezan, and a courtezan whom a trifle might have converted into the purest and most loving woman. In Camille pride and independence yet existed—two sentiments which, wounded, are capable of replacing modesty. I said nothing, for my whole soul seemed transfused into her heart, and my heart to have passed into her eyes.

"Then," said she to me, "it was you who inquired after me every day when I was sick?"

"Yes."

"It was kind. How can I thank you for it?"

"Let me see you sometimes."

"As often as you please—between five and six and eleven and twelve at night. Gaston, play the 'Invitation to the Note' for me."

"Why?" said he.

"To please me, and because I cannot play it myself."

"What is there difficult in it?"

"The third part."

Gaston went to the piano and played that wonderful melody of Von Weber, the music of which lay open on the desk.

Camille, with one hand on the desk, looked at the sheet, accompanying, in a low tone, every note with her voice: and when she came to the passage she had mentioned, sang aloud, and beat the time with her fingers. She made him play it again, and then said:

"Now let me try."

She took the stool, but her velvet fingers always mistook the notes she had mentioned.

"It is strange," said she, in a tone of child-like irritation, "that I cannot play that passage. Now; would you believe it, I sometimes am two hours at it, while that stupid Count plays it perfectly, and without the notes. I believe that is one reason I dislike him so."

She tried again and failed.

"The devil take Von Weber and pianos," said she, scattering the music on the floor.

She folded her arms and stamped on the floor, while the blood flushed her cheek and she coughed slightly.

"There," said Prudence, who had taken off her bonnet and was smoothing her hair before the glass, "you are getting angry, and are injuring yourself. Let us have supper at once—for I die of hunger."

Camille rang again, and going to the piano began in a half-voice to sing a libertine song, in which she did not break down. Gaston knew it, and they made a kind of duo.

"Do not sing such songs," said I, in a supplicating voice, but somewhat familiarly.

"How chaste you are!" said she, giving her hand.

"I speak," said I, "but for you."

Camille made a motion which said, "I have done with chastity long ago." Just then Nanine returned.

"Is supper ready?" said Camille.

"Yes, madame, in a moment."

"*Apropos*," said Prudence to me, "you have not seen the room. Let me show it to you."

You know how beautiful it was. Camille went a little way with us and then called Gaston, with whom she went into the dining-room to see if all was ready.

"Look," said Prudence, taking from a pier-table a porcelain figure, "I did not know you had this."

"Which?"

"The shepherd with a cage."

"Take it if you like it."

"Ah! but I deprive you of it."

"I intended to give it to Nanine; I think it hideous."

Prudence only saw the present and not the manner of it. She took the present, and took me into the dressing-

room, where, pointing to two miniatures, she said, "This is the Comte de G., who was very much in love with Camille. He was her first lover."

"And this one?" said I.

"The Vicomte de L. He had to leave her."

"Why?"

"He had ruined himself. He loved Camille."

"And she loved him?"

"She is an odd girl, who never knows what she is about. The day he left she went to the play as usual, yet she wept for an hour before."

Just then they told us supper was ready.

When we came into the room Camille leaned against the wall and Gaston held her hands. He was speaking to her in a low tone.

"You are mad. You know you would not suit me. It is not after knowing a woman like me two years that one asks to be her lover. Women like me either yield at once or never. Come, gentlemen, sit down."

Escaping from Gaston, Camille made him sit on her right and myself on her left, and said to Nanine, "tell the cook not to let any one in."

The hour was one o'clock. We ate, laughed and drank; after a few minutes gayety had become excessive, and witticisms, which sully the lips they leave, were uttered by Nanine, Camille and Prudence. Gaston amused himself, for he was a lad of heart, somewhat deteriorated by familiar association with people his inferior. For a while I sought to shun myself, and to make my bearing and my heart indifferent to the spectacle before me, and to play my part as others did. Gradually, however, I became almost sad at seeing this beautiful creature of twenty drink and speak like a trooper, laughing loudest at the most scandalous jests. Yes, this mode of speaking and drinking, which elsewhere seemed to me the token of debauch, seemed at Camille's but an evidence of forgetfulness and nervous irritability. At every glass of champagne her cheeks flushed with fever, and her cough, which at the commencement of the supper seemed but slight, grew toward the end so violent that she was forced to lean back and place her hands on her chest at every access of coughing.

The effect of daily vice on her constitution pained me.

At last what I foresaw and dreaded took place. Camille was seized with a yet more violent fit of coughing. The poor girl became purple, closed her eyes, and removing her napkin from her lips showed that it was stained with blood. She then arose and turned to her dressing-room.

"What is the matter?" asked Gaston.

"She laughed so violently that she has spit blood," said Prudence. "It is nothing, and happens every day."

I was not so easily satisfied, and, much to the dissatisfaction of Nanine and Prudence, joined Camille.

CHAPTER X.

The room in which she took refuge was lighted by a single lamp. Thrown on a large sofa, with her dress loosened, one hand was on her heart, and the other was hanging by her side. On the table was a silver vase half full of water marbled with threads of blood. She was very pale and her lips were half closed, as if she had a difficulty in breathing. Her bosom heaved with a long sigh, which seemed to relieve her somewhat, and, for a moment or two, left her somewhat better. I approached without her moving, drew near and sat down, taking one of her hands in mine.

"Ah! is it you?" said she, with a smile. It seems my face showed agitation, for she added, "Are you, too, ill?"

"No, madame," said I, "but you suffer. Do you wish to kill yourself. I wish I were your friend—your relation, to be able to restrain you."

"Ah! this attack should not frighten you," said she, somewhat bitterly. "Others pay no attention to me, for they know nothing can be done."

She put her candle on the mantel, and looked at herself in the glass.

"How pale I am," said she, fastening her dress, and passing her fingers through her loosened curls. "Bah! let us go back to the table—come."

I did not move, and she saw the emotion the scene had caused me, for she gave me her hand and said, "Come."

I took her hand, kissed and wept over it, though I strove long not to do so.

"You are a child,' said she, sitting by me. "Why do you weep?"

"I may seem foolish, but the scene I have witnessed has affected me fearfully."

"You are kind; but I cannot sleep, and must amuse myself. After all, what matters it about a woman of my kind, more or less? The doctors tell me the blood I spit is bronchial. I seem to believe them, and can do no more."

"Hear me, Camille," said I, with an emotion I could not repress, "I know not by what influence you rule me, but only that no one, not even my sister, influences me as you do. Thus it has been since I saw you. For Heaven's sake change your life, and live no longer as you have done."

"Were I to take care of myself, I should die. All that aids me is the feverish life I lead. Women who have a family and friends can take care of themselves, but we, when no longer able to minister to the vanity and passion of our lovers are deserted. Long nights follow long days. I know, for I was two months in bed, and during three weeks no one came to see me."

"It is true I am nothing to you," said I: "but if you please I will watch you like a brother. I will not leave, and will cure you. When recovered, if you please, you can resume the life you like, but I am sure you would like a tranquil life, which could not but make you happier, and would preserve your beauty."

"You think so this evening, because I have made you sad; to-morrow you would not have the resolution of which you boast."

"Let me tell you, Camille, you were sick for two months, and I then came every day to ask after you."

"True," said she, "but why did you not come up?"

"I did not know you."

"Why use ceremony with a girl like me?"

"I always use ceremony with women?"

"Then you would take care of me?"

"Yes."

"Every night?"

"Whenever I did not annoy you by doing so."

"How? What is this feeling?"

"Devotion."

"Whence comes it?"

"From an irresistible sympathy."

"Then you love me—tell me?"

"Possibly, but if it ever come, this is not the time to say so."

"You had best never say so."

"Why?"

"But two things would happen if you did."

"What?"

"Either I would not accept you, and would displease you, or you would have a sad mistress, a nervous, sick woman, who would spit blood and spend a hundred thousand francs a year. This would suit a rich old Duke well enough, but not a young man like you, and the evidence of all this is that my lovers soon leave me."

I neither replied to nor heard this frankness, amounting almost to confession, uncovering the painful life over which a golden veil was hung, driving the poor girl from reality to debauch, intoxication and sleeplessness. All this impressed me so that I could not be silent.

"Come," said Camille, "we talk idly. Give me your hand, we will rejoin them at supper; none should know what our absence means."

"Go if you please, but suffer me to remain."

"Why?"

"Your gayety distresses me painfully. Let me tell you this:—Since I first met you, I know not how nor why, but you have taken a place in my existence, and that I seek in vain to drive your image from my mind. To-day when I saw you after a lapse of two years, the ascendancy you had exerted over my mind seemed greater than ever; and now, that I have seen you in your house, I understand the reason. You have become indispensable to me, and I shall be mad, not only if you do not love me, but if you do not suffer me to love you."

But I must tell you what she said:—"You are rich, but do not know that I spend six or seven thousand francs a month, that this expense has become necessary to my life, and that I would ruin you in a short time. You do not know that your family would forbid you to live with one like me. Love me as a friend, and come to see me as such alone. You have a kind heart, but need love, and are too

young and sensitive to live with me; love a married woman. You see I speak sincerely to you."

"Ah! what on earth are you about?" said Prudence, whom we had not heard come, and who appeared at the door with her dress loose and her hair in disorder.

"We are talking reason. Leave us alone and we will rejoin you soon."

"Very well, talk on," said Prudence, leaving us, and slamming the door as if to add to the emphasis of her last words.

"Then," said Camille, "it is resolved on, that you will love me no more."

"I will go."

"That is the state of things?"

I had gone too far to retreat. She overpowered me. The union of gayety, sadness, disease and lasciviousness, had developed the acuteness of her sensations and irritability of her nerves, telling me that if I did not at once resume possession of her changeful nature, all was lost to me.

"Let me see," said she, "if you are serious."

"I am."

"Why did you not tell me before?"

"When could I!"

"On the day after you were introduced to me at the opera."

"I think if I had come to see you I should have been badly received."

"Why?"

"I had been so stupid on the previous evening."

"True. But you loved me then."

"Yes."

"But you still slept calmly afterward. We understand all this."

"You are wrong. Do you know how I passed that night."

"No."

"I waited for you at the door of the *Café Anglais*, and followed the carriage which took you and your three friends away, and was delighted when I saw you enter your house alone."

Camille laughed.

"What are you laughing at?"

"Nothing."

"Tell me, I beg you, or I shall think you laugh at me."

"You will be angry."

"What right have I?"

"There was a good reason why I entered alone."

"What reason?"

"I was waited for here."

She could not have wounded me more, and I arose and gave her my hand.

"Adieu," said I.

"I knew you would be angry; men are always offended at hearing what should distress them."

"But I assure you," said I, as if resolved to prove that I was not cured of my passion, "that I am not angry. It is very natural that some one should wait for you."

"Have you, too, a person who waits for you?"

"No, but I must go."

"Adieu, then."

"You dismiss me?"

"Not so."

"Why do you distress me?"

"What distress do I give you?"

"You told me some one waited for you."

"I could not refrain from laughing at the idea of your being pleased to see me enter alone, when I had so good a reason."

"Follies often please us, and it is wrong to destroy them when, by suffering them to exist, one can make another happier."

"But with whom do you think you have to do? I am neither a virgin nor a duchess. I never knew you until to-day, and owe you no account for my actions. Even if I should some day become your mistress, you must know that I have other lovers. If you play the jealous lover beforehand, what will be the future state of things? I never saw such a man."

"None ever loved you as I do."

"Then you really love me?"

"As much as man can."

"Well, tell me what I must do in return for this great love?"

"Love me," said I, and my heart beat so that I could scarcely speak; for, in spite of her half-mocking smile, it

seemed to me that she too began to share my trouble, and that the hour I had so long expected was at hand.

"Well, the Duke?" said she."

"What Duke?"

"My old Duke."

"He will know nothing."

"But if he do?"

"He will forgive you."

"He will desert me—and then what will I become?"

"You run this risk for another."

"What mean you?"

"You gave orders that no one else should be admitted."

"True, but that person was but a friend."

"Of whom you are not very fond, as you shut your door in his face."

"You should not reproach me with the act, which was committed to enable me to receive you."

I had gradually approached Camille, had put my arms around her, and felt her gradually sink into them. I murmured:

"If you knew how much I love you."

"Really?"

"I swear it."

"Well, if you promise to obey me blindly, I will love you, perhaps."

"I will do all you please."

"I will inform you. I wish to be free to act as I please, without giving you any details of my life. I have long sought a young lover, without distrust, whom I could love without giving him any rights over me. Men, instead of being satisfied with what has long been granted them, and what they had long scarcely expected to obtain, ask their mistress to account to them for the past. As they grow used to them they wish to rule, and the more that is yielded the more they exact. If I now take a new lover he must have the rare qualifications of prudence, submission and discretion."

"Well, I will seek to satisfy you."

"We will see."

"When?"

"By-and-by. Because," said Camille, disengaging herself from my arms, and taking from a large bouquet of

camellias a red one, "because treaties cannot always be executed on the day they are signed."

This was easily understood.

"When shall I see you?"

"When the flower changes its color."

"When?"

"To-morrow, between eleven and twelve at night. Are you satisfied?"

"Do you ask?"

"Not a word of this to Prudence, to your friend, or to any one else."

"I promise you."

"Now kiss me, and let us return to the table."

I did so, and she again smoothed her hair. We left the room, she singing, and I on fire. When in the room, she said:

"It may be strange that I accept you thus readily. Do you know why? The reason is," continued she, putting my hand on her heart, which beat violently, "that if I should not live as long as others do, I am resolved to live more rapidly."

"Do not talk thus, I beg."

"Be consoled, for short as my life may be, it will outlive your love."

"Where is Nanine?" said she, seeing only Prudence and Gaston.

"Asleep in your room, waiting for you to go to bed."

"Poor girl! I am killing her. Go, gentlemen, it is high time."

Camille clasped my hand, and I left her with Prudence.

"Well," said Gaston, "what do you think of Camille?"

"She is an angel, and I am a madman."

"I thought so. Did you not tell her so?"

"Yes."

"She promised to believe you?"

"No."

CHAPTER XI.

At this point of the story Armand paused. He said:

"Do you wish to close the window? I begin to be cold, and in the meantime I will go to bed."

I shut the window. Armand, who was weak, took off his *robe de chambre* and lay down, resting his head for a moment on the pillow, like a wearied man worn out by painful recollections.

"You are fatigued; do you wish me to suffer you to rest awhile? You can tell me the rest of the story on some other day."

"Does it annoy you?"

"Not so—it interests me."

"I will go on. If left alone I would not be able to sleep." So he continued:

When I went home, though I did not try to recall them, all the details were present. I did not seek to sleep, but to reflect on the adventures of the day. My meeting, introduction, Camille's promise, all were present and had passed so rapidly that I almost thought I dreamed. Could Camille have promised herself to a man for the next evening? In vain did I seek to reflect; the impression she had exerted yet existed, and I was amazed at not finding her like others of her class, and with the characteristic vanity of my sex was ready to think that she shared the attraction I felt for her. Yet the most strange examples passed before me. I had often heard that, during one season, Camille's favors had passed from the highest to the lowest price of the market. How, though, could this be reconciled with the perpetual refusals she extended to the young Count. You will tell me that she disliked him, and as she was splendidly sustained by the Duke, why should she take as a lover a man who did not please her? Why then, though, did she not take Gaston, who was pleasant, accomplished and rich, and give herself to one

who was such a theme of ridicule when she first saw him? There are things which happen in a moment and are more weighty than those of a year. Of those at supper I alone had been uneasy when she left the table. I had followed her, and been unable to hide my emotions, and kissed and wept over her hand—and more than that, had paid her daily visits during the two months of her illness. I had shown her that I was a man of a different stamp from those she had yet known, and she might grant to a love thus expressed what she had often done to others without any evil effects. All this was probable enough, but whatever were the reasons of her consent, that she had consented was undeniable.

Now, I was in love with Camille; she was to be mine, but I was to ask her nothing. I will, however, tell you I had so poetized her that, as the time drew near when my heart should have become more full of hope, I doubted.

I did not close my eyes on that night. I did not recognize myself, for I was almost wild. I fancied I was neither rich nor handsome enough to possess such a woman, and then I felt vain that I should. I then began to fear that Camille would entertain a caprice of a few days for me, and had the presentiment of the pain a rupture would produce. I fancied it would perhaps be better for me not to see her, and, instead, to write her an explanation of my fears. I said to myself that she would be indebted to me for her physical and moral cure; that I would pass my life with her, and that her love would make me happier than the most virginal love. I cannot repeat to you the thousand thoughts which ascended from my heart to my head, and which gradually fell into sleep.

When I awoke it was two o'clock. The weather was glorious, and I never remember that it appeared more so. The events of the evening came back without shadows, and gayly escorted by hope. I was satisfied with her best actions, and, from time to time, my heart bounded in my bosom with joy. I could not account for the reasons which had kept me awake, but saw only the result and the time when I should possess Camille.

It was impossible for me to remain at home, for my room seemed too small to contain my happiness. I needed all nature to give expansion to myself. I went out, and passed down the Rue d'Antin. The *coupe* of

Camille waited for her. I went in the direction of the Champs Elysees.

After walking up and down between Round Point and the Chevaux de Marly for about an hour, I saw Camille's carriage. I did not know, but guessed at it. Just as she turned the angle of the Champs Elysees she paused, and a tall young man detached himself from a group to approach her.

They talked together for a few moments, the young man rejoined his friends, the horses started, and in the tall man I recognized the Count de G——, the portrait of whom Prudence had pointed out to me as the one to whom she owed her position. He was the one to whom she had forbidden her door, and I fancied she stopped her carriage to tell him the reason why, and to make a new excuse for the next night.

How the rest of the day passed I know not. I walked, smoked, talked, but preserve no memory of what I saw, or whom I met.

When ten o'clock came, I said to myself that it was time to go. At that time I lived in the Rue de Provence, and going down Rue de Mont Blanc, Louis le Grand, Port Mahon, etc., I came to the Rue d'Antin. I saw a light in the house, I rang, and asked if M'lle. Gautier was in, and was told that she was never in until eleven, or a quarter later.

I looked at my watch. I fancied I had walked slowly, having allowed but five minutes walk from the Rue de Provence to Camille's house. I then walked down this street, which, being without shops, is, as you know, almost deserted at this hour.

After about half an hour Camille came. She got out of her carriage and glanced around, as if in search for some one. The carriage was driven off, the stables not being in the house, and just as Camille was about to ring, I drew near and bade her good evening.

"Ah, it is you," she said, in a tone which did not assure me that she had expected to see me.

"Did you not tell me that you would expect me to-night?"

"True; but I forgot."

This word overturned all my morning reflections—all my hopes and plans I had, however, begun to grow used

to her ways, and did not leave, as I once would have done.

We went in. Nanine had the door already open, and Camille asked if Prudence had come in.

"No, madame," said Nanine.

"Go, bid her come in as soon as she returns. First, though, put out a lamp in the saloon, and if anyone comes, say that I am not in and will not return."

She was evidently annoyed at something; perhaps my visit was inconvenient. I did not know what to say, and stood where I was while Camille went to her bed-room.

She called me.

She took off her velvet cloak, and threw it on the bed, then sinking into a chair, which stood before a hot fire, she said, toying with a heavy gold chain:

"Tell me the news."

"Nothing, except that I should not have come this evening."

"Why?"

"You seem put out, and I was wrong to annoy you."

"You do not; but I have been ill all day, and suffer with the headache."

"Shall I go and suffer you to undress?"

"Not at all, for I can undress before you."

Just then the bell rang.

"Who is that?" she said, impatiently.

In a few moments the bell rang again.

"Is there no one to open—must I go myself?"

She arose, and said:

"Wait here."

She crossed the room and I heard the front door open. I listened.

The person who entered paused in the dining-room, and as he spoke I recognized the voice of the Count de N——.

"How are you?" said he.

"Ill," said Camille.

"Do I disturb you?"

"Perhaps."

"How you receive me! What have I done?"

"Nothing. I am ill. I must go to bed, and I wish you to go away. It is too bad that I can never come home at night without seeing you within five minutes. What do

you mean? Am I your mistress? I tell you that you annoy me horribly, and that you had best go somewhere else. I tell you to-day, for the last time, that I will have nothing to do with you. Nanine is just in time to light you out. Good evening."

Without hearing a word that the young man uttered, Camille returned and shut the door, at which Nanine almost immediately appeared.

"Do you hear me, Nanine? Tell that fool always that I will not see him. I am weary with seeing always those who come for the same thing; who pay me and think themselves always quits. If those who begin our shameful trade knew what it was, they would never be chambermaids. No. The vanity of robes, carriages and diamonds, leads us astray. They believe what they say, for libertinism, too, has its faith, and its heart and beauty are soon used up. It is feared like a Pariah, and surrounded by people who always claim more than they bestow, and when they, having ruined others, finally ruin themselves, they whine like dogs."

"Be calm, madame," said Nanine; "you are ill to-night."

"This dress is too tight," and snatching loose the fastening of her corsage, she said: "Give me a wrapper. Where is Prudence?"

"She has not yet come in, but they will send her to madame as soon as she comes in."

"There is another, too," she said, as she put on a wrapper. "She is easy enough to be found when she needs me, but cannot do me a favor with a good grace. She knows I wait for the answer, and yet she goes hither and thither without attending to me."

"She may have been detained."

"Bring us the punch."

"You will do yourself an injury."

"So much the better. Bring us fruit, some pastry, and fowl. Bring it quickly—I am hungry."

It is vain to attempt to describe the impression this scene produced, but you can guess at it.

"You will sup with me," said she. "Take a book and excuse me—I wish to go for a moment to my dressing-room."

She lighted the candle, opened a door at the foot of the

bed and disappeared. I began to reflect on this scene, and my love was increased to pity.

I was walking slowly up the room when Prudence appeared.

"What! you here? Where is Camille?"

"In her dressing-room."

"I will wait for her. She thinks you charming. Did you know that?"

"No."

"She did not tell you so?"

"Not at all."

"How came you here?"

"I came to visit her."

"At midnight?"

"Why not, she received me coldly enough."

"She will receive you better."

"You think so?"

"I bring her good news."

"All right! then she talked of me?"

"Yes; when you left with your friend, Gaston B——; that is his name, I think."

"Yes," (you will smile at this when you remember the secret Gaston told me. Yet Prudence was not sure of his name.)

"He is handsome," said she. "What is his business?"

"He has 20,000 francs a year."

"Indeed! Well, but about yourself Camille talked much. She asked me who you were, what mistress you had, and all the usual questions."

"Thank you—now tell me what commission she gave you yesterday."

"None—she told me to dismiss the Count. She gave me one to-day, the answer to which I bring her——"

Just then Camille came in, elegantly dressed in *bonnet de nuit*, with yellow ribbons, technically called *les chaux*. She was beautiful. Her bare feet were in satin slippers.

"Well! Did you see the Duke?"

"Yes."

"And he said——"

"Nothing; he gave——"

"What?"

"Six thousand——"

"You have it?"

"Yes."

"Was he annoyed?"

"No."

"Poor man!"

This last phrase I cannot describe. Camille took the notes, and Prudence continued:

"You know, my child, that we are within but a few days of the 15th, and if you can lend me three or four hundred francs, you will do me a favor."

"Send to-morrow—it is now too late to make change."

"Do not forget."

"Be at ease. Sup with us."

"No, Charles is waiting for me."

"You will not be prudent, then, ever."

"Adieu, Armand; adieu, my dear Camille."

Camille opened a drawer, and threw the money in.

"Let me go to bed," said she, smiling as she passed me.

"Do so, I beg of you."

"Now," said she, "sit by me and let us talk."

Prudence was right, for the answer she brought to Camille delighted her.

"Pray excuse my ill-humor this evening," said she, taking me by the hand.

"I am ready to forgive you much greater offenses."

"You love me?"

"Madly."

"In spite of my bad repute?"

"In spite of everything."

"You swear it?"

"Yes," I said, in a low tone.

Nanine came in with plates, a cold chicken, a bottle of Bordeaux claret and two covers.

"I did not make the punch. Bordeaux will suit you better, will it not, monsieur?" said Nanine.

"Certainly," said I, with my eyes fixed on Camille, yet thinking of her last words.

"Well, put the little table close to the bed; we will wait on ourselves. You have not slept for three nights. Go to bed. I need nothing more."

"Must I bolt the door?"

"Yes; let no one in before to-morrow."

CHAPTER XII.

At four o'clock in the morning, when day began to shine through the curtains, Camille said:

"Excuse me, but I must send you away. The Duke comes every day early. They will tell him to-day I am asleep, and he will wait until I awake."

I took in my hands Camille's head. Her hair was dishevelled and falling around her, and I gave her a last kiss.

"When shall I see you again?" asked I.

"Take the little gold key behind the door," said she; "open the door, and bring me the key. During the day you will receive my order. You know you are to obey me implicitly."

"Yes; but if I asked a favor of you?"

"What is it?"

"To suffer me to keep this key."

"That I have never granted any one. You will not ask me?"

"Well, do so for me, for I swear I love you as no man ever did."

"Keep it then. I tell you, though, at any time I can make it useless."

"How?"

"There is a bolt inside."

"Wicked!"

"Which I will have taken off."

"You love me a little, then?"

"I do not know why, but I think I do."

We remained a few moments in each other's arms, and I left her.

The streets were deserted. The great city slept, and a freshness pervaded those *quartiers* which the noise of men would soon possess itself of. The sleeping city seemed to belong to me, and I sought to recall the names of those whose blessings I had hitherto envied. I could then think of none more blessed than I.

To love a chaste girl, to reveal to her first the mystery of love, certainly is a great happiness, but it is not the greatest on earth. It is simple enough to take possession of a heart not used to attacks, to enter an unprotected and unfortified town. Education, family sentiment and duty are very touching, but anything tender deceives a girl of sixteen, who, in obedience to the voice of honor, receives from him she loves those first lessons which are the more effective in proportion as they are the more pure.

But the more a young woman believes in good, the more readily she abandons herself, if not to the lover, to love; for being without distrust, she is without power, and to make himself loved by her is a triumph which any man of twenty-five can have when he pleases. This is so true, that see how poor girls are surrounded by watchers and ramparts; convents have no walls high enough, and religion no oaths strong enough to restrain those charming birds of passage in the cages in which none have even taken care enough to strew flowers. Thus, they must long for the world concealed from them, which they must fancy tempting, love the first melody of the voice which passes their ears to tell them their secrets, and kiss the hand which had first lifted the veil of a mystery to them.

Let me, however, return to the commencement of this *liasion*. When I returned home I was madly gay. Fancying the barriers interposed by my imagination between Camille and myself had disappeared—that she was mine, and that I understood her thoughts perfectly—that I had the key to her room, and the right to use it, I was satisfied. But what good did all this do?

One day a young man passes in a street. He elbows a woman, looks at her, then turns back and passes. He does not know that woman; she has her joys and sorrows, in which he in no respect participates. He has nothing to do with her, and, if he spoke to her, she would laugh at him, as perhaps Camille has at so many, even at me. Years, months roll by, during which they accomplish their destiny, and chance, perhaps, brings them together. This woman has become the mistress of a man, and loves him. How? Why? Their existence has become but one. They know each other, and immediately their intimacy appeared to have existed forever. All that preceded it seemed effaced from their memory. This is curious. I did not remem-

her how I had previously existed. All my being was exalted into joy by the memory of the words exchanged on the previous night. Camille was either most skillful in deceit, or she had conceived for me one of those sudden passions, revealed by the first kiss, which sometimes goes no farther. I sank to sleep, reflecting that Camille had no reason to feign love for me, and was aroused at an early hour to read the following note:

"The following are my orders: Be at the Vaudeville this evening. Come during the third act. C. G."

I locked up the note, that I might always retain possession of the reality, lest I should ever doubt it.

She did not tell me to see her during the day, but I was so anxious to see her before the appointed time that I went to Champs Elysees and saw her pass again. I was at the Vaudeville at seven o'clock, though I had never gone to the theater at such an early hour before. All the boxes except one in the center of the first circle were taken. At the beginning of the third act the door of that opened, and I saw Camille looking for me. She summoned me to her by a glance. That evening she was wonderfully beautiful. Was I the cause of this coquetry, and did she love me enough to be anxious for me to admire her? I know not that this was the case, but if so, she succeeded; for, when she entered, the heads of the audience undulated, and even the actors on the stage looked at her who disputed public attention with them.

Yet I had the key of that woman's room, and might know when she came and went.

Those who ruin themselves for actresses and other women are censured, when the wonder is that twice as much money is not spent on their charms. One must have lived as I did to be aware of the thousand ways by which they gratify their lovers daily. Prudence also came to the box, and a man, whom I saw afterward was the Count de G——, sat in the dark portion of it. As I saw him a cold chill passed over my heart.

Camille certainly saw the impression produced on me by the appearance of that man in her box, for she smiled on me again, turned her back on the Count, and seemed very attentive t[illegible]. After the third act she turned

around, said a few words, the Count left the box, and Camille called me to her.

"Be seated," said she.

"I take some one's place. Will Count de G—— return?"

"Yes, I sent him for bonbons, to enable us to talk for a moment alone. Duverney is my confidante."

"Yes, do not be uneasy, for I shall be silent."

"What is the matter this evening," said Camille, coming into the shade of the box, to be able to kiss me unseen.

"I am not well."

"You must go to bed," said she with an ironical air.

"Where?"

"At your home."

"You know I will be unable to sleep."

"Then stop pouting, even if there be a man in my box."

"That is not the reason."

"The fact is so, and you are wrong. Come, after the play, to Prudence's, and remain there until you are called."

"Yes—but if I disobey?"

"Do you love me?"

"Do you ask?"

"Have you thought of me?"

"All day long."

"Do you know I am afraid of loving you? Talk to Prudence about it."

"Ah!" said the old woman, "she is."

"Now go to your place," said she "the Count is about to return, and need not find you here."

"Why?"

"Because you do not like to see him."

"No. Because, had you told me you wished to come to the Vaudeville, I could have taken this box for you as well as he."

"Unfortunately, he bought it unasked for, and requested leave to accompany me. I could not refuse to accompany him, and I could only write to you that you might see me. I, too, wished to see you. If, however, you thank me thus, I will take advantage of the lesson."

"I am wrong. Forgive me."

"Very well. Go back to your box, and do not play the jealous lover."

After all, the presence of Count de G—— in Camille's box was natural enough. That she should accompany an old admirer, who had bought a box, to the play was simple enough, and soon as a woman like Camille became my mistress I had to use myself to it. I was not, however, the less unhappy during the rest of the evening, and was not the less so when I saw the Count de G——, Camille, and Prudence, drawn away in the same carriage.

A quarter of an hour after I was at Prudence's house. She had just come home.

CHAPTER XIII.

"You came almost as soon as we did," said Prudence.

"Yes. Where is Camille?"

"At home."

"Alone?"

"With de G——"

I walked up and down the room.

"Well, what is the matter?"

"Does it not seem odd for me to wait here until Count de G—— leaves Camille?"

"You are unreasonable, for Camille cannot put de G——, who lived long with her, out of the door. He has always given her much money, and does so yet. Camille spends one hundred thousand francs a year, and is much in debt. The Duke sends all she asks for, but she dares not tell him all. She must not quarrel with the Count, who gives her an extra ten thousand francs. Camille loves you, but situated as you are, your *liaison* with her must not be serious. By means of your pension of seven or eight hundred francs, you cannot sustain the luxury of that girl. It would not pay for her carriage. Look on Camille as she really is—a pretty and intellectual girl. Be her lover for a month or two; give her bouquets, bon-bons, and opera boxes; but do not indulge in ridiculous scenes. You know with whom you have to do. Please her, love her, and care about nothing else. I am glad you are sus-

ceptible. You have the most agreeable mistress in Paris, who receives you in a magnificent room; she is covered with diamonds, and will not cost you a sou. Are you not satisfied? What more would you have?"

"You are right; but the idea that de G—— is her lover is too much for me."

"Is he her lover? He is merely a man she needs. She has had her doors closed on him for two days. He came this morning and asked her to accept of a box, and his company. He went with her, and on his return has gone for a short time. He will not remain, for you wait here. You do not object to the Duke?"

"He is an old man, and I am sure Camille is not his mistress. One may submit, too, to one *liaison*, but not to more. It looks too much as if a perfect traffic of love was made."

"Ah! you are behind the age. How many have I seen of the elegant and noble do what I advise you, and without any effort. But how think you so many women of Paris continue to lead the life they do, without three or four lovers each? No fortune whatever can meet the extravagances of a woman like Camille. A fortune of five hundred thousand a year in Paris is huge. Well, even that would be spent. And why? A man with such a fortune has an establishment, dependents, and horses. Often he is married, has children who have their extravagances and indulgences. Those he cannot restrict without causing scandal, and consequently he cannot give a woman more than fifty thousand francs a year, and that is a good sum. Well, a woman like Camille must have other lovers to make up the deficit. Camille gets on admirably, for she has fortunately met an old man, the wife and daughter of whom are dead, and who gives all she asks for, exacting no return. She cannot, however, go to him for more than sixty thousand francs, and I am sure if she asked him for more, in spite of his affection, he would refuse her."

"Let us, however," said Prudence, "admit that Camille loves you well enough to break with the Count and the Duke, and the one should tell her to select between him and you, the sacrifice she would make you would be enormous. What equal sacrifice would you make for her? You would have isolated her from the world in which her

fortune lay. She would sacrifice her youth to you and be forgotton. If an ordinary man, you would taunt her with the past, and say, in leaving her, you had but done what many of her lovers had, and subject her to certain want. Otherwise you would be kind, and feel forced to keep her by you, and subject yourself to trouble for a *liaison* of this kind, excusable in a young man, is less so to one of mature age—it permits no family ties, no ambition. Take things, then, as they are, and let no woman ever call herself your creditor."

This was all more logical than I had expected to hear from Prudence. I could only tell her she was right, and give her my hand.

"Get rid," she said, "of those fancies, and laugh! Life is joyous or not, according to the mirror through which it is contemplated. Consult your friend Gaston, who understands love as I do. Be convinced of this, or you will be an insipid boy. Now, sit at the window with me and wait until the Count goes; he will soon do so."

Prudence opened the window, and we looked out of it. She looked at the passers-by, while I dreamed. All she had said boiled in my mind, and I could not but agree that she was right, though my passion was not at all satisfied on that account. I sighed so that Prudence turned around from time to time, and shrugged her shoulders, as a physician despairing of a man's recovery does.

At last the Count left, and was driven off in his carriage. Then Prudence closed her window, and at the same time Camille called up:

"Come quick, and sit down. I am about to sup."

When I went in, Camille hurried to me, clung to my neck, and embraced me. She said:

"Are you yet in ill humor?"

"No," said Prudence. "I have been lecturing him and he has promised to be better."

"Very well."

I looked in the boudoir; nothing had been disturbed. Camille yet had on the white wrapper. We sat down. Camille had every attraction, and I soon had to own I possessed no right to ask aught of her; that many would rejoice in my place, and that, like a happy shepherd, I had but to enjoy the luxuries of a god, or rather of a goddess. I wished to put the theories of Prudence in

practice, and to be as my two companions. What was natural to them, however, was an effort to me, and my laughter was almost hysterical.

Supper was over, and I was alone with Camille, who sat, as usual, on the sofa before the fire, and looked sadly at the blaze. I do not know what she was thinking of, but I looked at her with terror when I thought what I was about to suffer on account of her.

"Sit by me," said she, and I did so.

"Know you what I am thinking of?"

"What is it?"

"I cannot tell you now, but in a month I shall be free and out of debt, and we will pass the summer together in the country."

"Can you not explain?"

"No, love me only as I do you, and all will succeed."

"Is the expedient all your own?"

"Yes."

"Can you carry it on alone?"

"I alone will have the trouble," and a smile played on her face, "but we will share the advantage."

I could not but blush at the idea, for I remembered Manon wasting with Desgreaux the money of M. de B——, I said, with a stern voice:

"You must permit me to share none of the benefits of other undertakings than of those I participate in."

"What is the meaning of this?"

"That I suspect the Count de G—— to be your associate in this expedient. That I will accept neither benefits nor charges from him."

"You are foolish; I thought you loved me, but I was wrong."

She arose, opened her piano, and played the invitation waltz, until she came to the famous part in the major, where she always failed. Was it a mere habit, or was it to recall to me our first meeting? All I know is that I approached her, and begged her to forgive me.

"You see I do," said she; "but remember we are only at our second day and already have much to forgive. You keep your promise of blind obedience but poorly."

"I love you too fondly, and am jealous of your very idea. What you suggested just now would make me mad with

joy; but the mystery which precedes the execution of the plan crushes my heart."

She persuaded me, however, to consent, and I finally said:

"Be it as you wish."

"Before a month passes, then, we will be in some village, by the water's side. It may seem strange to you to hear me, Camille Gautier, speak thus, but the reason is that this Parisian life I seem to love so, consumes me; and then I have desires for a calmer life. One ever remembers childhood, whatever may intervene. Be calm, I am not about to tell you that I am the daughter of a half-pay colonel, educated at St. Denis. I am a poor country girl, who six years ago was unable to write her name. Why is it you are the first person I ever asked to share this pleasure with me? Because I saw that you loved me for myself, while others have done so for their own. I have often been in the country, but never as I wished to go. On you I rely for this pleasure. It should not be delayed, and I cannot forgive myself for not having mentioned it before."

What could I say, especially with the recollection of our first night? An hour later I had Camille in my arms, and I would have obeyed her had she asked me to commit murder.

I left at six in the morning, and said, as I left:

"This evening."

She embraced me the more, but she did not reply. During the day I received a letter containing these words:

"My dear fellow. I am sick, and my doctor bids me to be quiet. I shall go to bed early this evening, and will be unable to see you. To reward you, I shall be at home to-morrow. I love you."

The first thing I said was, she deceives me. An icy perspiration passed across my brow, for I was too fond of this unfortunate woman for trouble like this not to overcome me completely. Yet I had to expect such treatment from Camille every day. This had often befallen me with my other acquaintances without attracting any great degree of attention. Whence came, then, the influence this woman exerted over me?

I thought, as I had the key to the room, I would go there. Thus I would know the truth, and if I found a man, I would slap his face. In the interim I went to the

Champs Elysees. On the next evening I went to the theater she used to frequent, but she was invisible.

At eleven o'clock I was in the Rue d'Antin. There was no light in any of the windows. I rang the bell. The porter asked me whither I was going.

"To see Mlle. Gautier."

"She has not come back."

"I will wait for her."

"There is no one at home."

Evidently I could avoid this order, for I had her key. I feared, however, a ridiculous blunder. I did not go home, and I could not leave the street. It seemed to me that I had something to learn, and at least that my suspicions were right.

About midnight a cab I knew well stopped at the door. Having dismissed his carriage, the Count de G. entered the house. For a moment I hoped that, like me he would be dismissed, but at four o'clock he was yet in.

For three weeks I had suffered much; but all was nothing to that night.

CHAPTER XIV.

When at home I wept like a child. This has happened to every one more than once in his life, for all have been deceived more than once.

Under the influence of the feverish resolutions we ever think ourselves able to adhere to, I resolved to terminate our connection at once, and was anxious for day to come that I might take my place in the diligence and return to my father and sister, the love of whom I was sure would not betray me. I was, however, unwilling to go without Camille knowing why. Only a man who does not love his mistress leaves her without writing to her.

I thought over twenty different letters. I had been too poetical, and she had treated me as a schoolboy, using to deceive me a ruse of insulting simplicity.

My self-love then became ascendant. I should leave

this woman without giving her the satisfaction of a rupture, which was painful to me, and I wrote the following letter, as elegantly as I could, with tears of rage in my eyes:

"My Dear Camille:—I trust your illness of yesterday was but trifling. I went, between eleven and midnight, to ask after you and was told that you had not come in. M. de G., it seems, was more fortunate, for he came a few minutes after, and at four in the morning had not yet gone.

"Pardon me the weary hours I have caused you, and be sure that I never will forget the happiness I owe to you."

"I would have come to ask after you to-day, but expect to return to my father's.

"Adieu, Camille. I am not rich enough to sustain you as you wish, nor poor enough to see you as I would. Forget then, one who must be indifferent to you, a happiness which must be impossible. I send back your key, which I have never used, and which may be useful to you if you are often attacked as you were last night."

As you see I could not write this letter without an impertinent irony, showing how much I loved her. I read this letter over and over, thinking that the trouble it would give her would calm me. I grew bold, and when my servant came, bade him deliver the letter.

"Must I await an answer?" asked Joseph (like all his class, his name was Joseph).

"If they ask if an answer is needed, say you do not know, and wait."

I fancied, weak creatures that we are, that she would reply.

While Joseph was absent, I was in the greatest agitation. When I remembered how Camille had given herself to me, I asked how I dared to write such a letter, when she might reply that not I but M. de G—— was deceived.

Sometimes recalling her protestations, I sought to convince myself that, under the circumstances, my letter was too mild. Then I fancied I had better not have written, and not have gone to her all day, and thus enjoyed the tears she could not have but shed. I then began to conjecture

what answer she would give, and had already managed an excuse when Joseph returned.

"Well," said I.

"Madame was asleep, but when she awoke they would send the answer if there was any."

She slept.

Twenty times I was on the point of sending for the letter, but I did not, fancying it had perhaps already been given her.

As the hour for the receipt of her reply drew near, I regretted the more that I had written. Ten and eleven came.

At noon I was on the point of going to the rendezvous as if nothing had passed. I could invent no way to extricate myself from the iron band which inclosed me.

I yet waited a reply at one o'clock.

With a superstition peculiar to all anxious people, I fancied if I went out for a short time, on my return I would find a reply. Answers impatiently waited for always come when not expected.

I left then, under the pretext of going to breakfast. Instead of going to the Cafe Foy on the corner of the Boulevard, as I used to, I went to the Palais Royal, to have an opportunity of passing under the windows of Camille.

As often as I saw a form in the distance I fancied Nanine was bringing me a letter. I met, however, no one; went into Very's, and returned home, after having paid for a breakfast I did not eat.

My eyes were fixed on the clock, and I went home convinced that I would find a letter. None had come.

Had Camille intended to write, she would have done so.

I then began to regret the terms of the letter. I should certainly have been silent. This would have at least made her uneasy, for when she saw I did not keep the appointment she would have asked reasons for my absence, and then I could have replied to her. She then could not but have exculpated herself, and I wished her to do so. I felt that I would have yielded to any excuses, and that anything would have pleased me better than not to see her.

I almost began to think that she would come herself to see me. Time passed, however, and she did not come.

Certainly Camille was unlike other women, for few, on the receipt of such a letter as I had written, would not have made some answer.

At five o'clock I hurried to the Champs Elysees, and said to myself, if I meet her I will affect an air of indifference, and she will be assured I have forgotten her.

At the turning of the Rue Royale I saw her pass. The meeting was brief, and I grew pale. I know not if she observed my emotions; but I was so troubled that I scarcely saw her carriage.

I did not continue my promenade to the Champs Elysees, but looked at the theater bills. I was yet full of the idea of meeting her.

A first representation took place at the Palais Royal, at which I was sure Camille would be present.

I was at the theater at seven o'clock, and, though the boxes were full, I did not see Camille. I left the house and went into all the theaters she frequented—the Vaudeville, the Varieties, and the Opera Comique.

She did not appear. Either my letter gave her so much trouble that she could not come to the play, or she was afraid to meet me.

Such were the whisperings of my vanity, when I met Gaston, who asked whence I came?

"From the Palais Royal."

"I came from the Odeon, where I expected to see you."

"Why?"

"Camille was there."

"Alone?"

"No; with a female friend. The Count de G—— was for a moment in her box, but left with the Duke. I expected to see you every moment, and a seat stood vacant, next to me, all the evening. I was satisfied you had taken it."

"Why should I go to see Camille?"

"Because you are her lover."

"Who told you so?"

"Prudence, whom I saw yesterday. I congratulate you. One cannot find a better mistress. She is a credit to you."

This remark of Gaston proved to me how ridiculous my susceptibility was. If I had met him on the previous evening, I would not have written such a ridiculous letter.

I was on the point of going to Prudence and requesting her to tell Camille that I wished to speak to her. I was afraid, though, that to avenge herself she would not speak to me, and I went home after having passed the Rue d'Antin. I asked if there was a letter, and was told there was none. She wishes to see what I will do next, and whether I will retract my letter of to-day, but seeing that I do not, she will write me to-morrow.

That night, at least, I repented of what I had done. I was alone at home, could not sleep, was devoured by uneasy jealousy, and gave vent to my nerves at an hour when I might have been at Camille's side and listening to her honeyed words. What was most painful in my situation, was the fact that reflection showed me that I was wrong; for everything told me that Camille loved me. In the first place was her plan of passing the summer in the country with me; then the certainty that nothing compelled her to be my mistress, for my fortune was insufficient for her whims and caprices. She had, therefore, no interest in me but the idea or expectation of meeting in me a sincere affection, to replace the mercenary loves amid which she had lived. On the next day, however, I crushed this hope, and repaid in irony or impertinence a love acknowledged and granted on two occasions. I had, therefore, been not ridiculous, but indelicate. I should have, at that time, made Camille a present sufficiently rich to admit of no doubt of my generosity, and which would have permitted me, by treating her as a paid mistress, to think me even with her. I feared, however, to offend her by the least semblance of reward, as I would have offended myself by any allusion to traffic. My passion for her was too pure to admit of any compensation, and could not be paid for by any present, rich as it was, so great was the happiness she had conferred on me.

Such things passed all night through my mind, and every moment I was ready to hurry to tell them to Camille. As you imagine, it was necessary for me to take a decided part, and either to abandon Camille or my scruples. At dawn I was yet awake, had a fever, and could think of no other subject.

At nine o'clock I hurried to Prudence's. She asked me to what she was indebted for this morning visit. I dared

not tell her frankly what was the matter, but that I had left home thus early to take a place in the diligence to C——,where my father lived.

"You are fortunate," said she, "in being able to leave Paris so early."

I looked to see if she was laughing at me; but she seemed serious.

"Will you bid Camille adieu?" said she.

"No."

"You are right."

"Do you think so?"

"Certainly—as you have quarreled, why see her?"

"You know of our quarrel?"

"I saw your letter."

"What said she?"

"'Prudence, your protege is not polite. One imagines such letters, but never writes them.'"

"And in what tone did she speak?"

"Smilingly," she said; and added, "'he supped twice at my house, and did not even return a visit of thanks.'"

My letters and my jealousy had produced this effect. I was humbled both in vanity and in love.

"What did she do yesterday."

"She went to the opera."

"I know; and then?"

"Supped at home."

"Alone?"

"With De G——, I think."

"Then our quarrel has not affected her habits?"

"Not at all."

"I am glad she has forgotten me," said I with a heart-broken smile.

"She is right, and you are also. You have acted more reasonably than she, for she loved you, talked of nothing else, and was capable of any folly."

"Why did she not answer my letter?"

"Because she saw she was wrong in loving you. Though women permit their love, they never permit their self-love to be outraged by a man's leaving them, after the lapse of but two days; never mind what the cause of the rupture may be. I know Camille, and she would die sooner than answer you."

"What must I do?"

"Nothing. You will forget each other, and have no cause to reproach yourselves."

"But if I wrote to ask her pardon?"

"Be wise; she will pardon you."

I was near hugging Prudence.

A quarter of an hour afterward I was at home, and wrote as follows:

"A person who repents of a letter written yesterday, and who will leave to-morrow if you do not pardon him, asks when he may lay his repentance at your feet? When will he find you alone? You know his confessions must not have witnesses."

I sent my prose madrigal by Joseph, who gave my letter to Camille herself, who said she would send an answer.

I did not go to dinner, but at eleven o'clock there was no answer.

I made up my mind to avoid further suffering, and to set out on the next day. Being resolved to do so, and satisfied that if I lay down I would be unable to sleep, I began to pack up my baggage.

CHAPTER XV.

Joseph and I had been preparing about an hour for our departure, when a loud ringing was heard at the door.

"Shall I open, sir?"

"Yes."

I wondered who could come at such an hour, and dared not think it could be Camille.

"Monsieur," said Joseph, "two ladies."

"It is me, Armand," said a voice I recognized as Prudence's.

I left my chamber. Prudence was standing, and examined my preparations with curiosity. Camille sat thinking on the sofa. I went to her, took her hand, knelt, and said: "Pardon me." She kissed me, and said:

'This is the third time I have done so."

"I was to leave to-morrow."

"Why should my visit alter your resolutions? I am not come to hinder you from leaving Paris, but because I have not all day time to reply, and would not have you angry with me. Prudence, too, sought to prevent me, and said I would probably disturb you."

"How could you?"

"You might have some woman here, and it would be very amusing to her to see two others come," said Prudence.

During this observation of Prudence's, Camille looked attentively at me.

"My dear Prudence," said I, "you do not know what you say."

"Your rooms are very pleasant. May I see where you sleep?"

"Yes."

She went into my room, less to examine it than to repair the folly she had committed, thus leaving Camille and myself together.

"Why did you bring Prudence?" asked I.

"She was with me at the play, and when I left your room I would need a companion."

"Was I not here?"

"Yes; but besides being unwilling to disturb you, it was certain that on coming to my door you would wish to come in, and as it was impossible I did not wish to leave you offended at a refusal."

"Why could you not receive me?"

"Because I am watched, and the least suspicion would be a great misfortune."

"Is that the only reason?"

"Were there another I would tell you, for we need no longer have secrets from each other."

"Camille, I wish to come to the point at once—tell me frankly do you love me?"

"Much."

"Why do you deceive me?"

"Were I a Duchess, with an income of 200,000 francs a year; if I were your mistress, and I had another lover, you would have a right to ask me. I am, though, Camille Gautier, 40,000 francs in debt, have no fortune, and spend

100,000 francs a year. Your proposition is therefore idle and offensive."

"True," said I, suffering my head to sink on her knees; "but I love you madly."

"Well, you must either love me less or understand me better. Your letter pained me much. Had I been free, I would not have received the Count yesterday, or having received him, would have come at once to ask you to forgive me, and would promise to have no other lover. I fancied at first that for six months I might allow myself this happiness, but you would not permit, insisting to know how, and by what means. The means were easy enough to know. I had but to say I need twenty thousand francs. You loved me and would soon have raised them. Such as I am, when they have any remnant of heart, are wont to yield to words what gold can never bring, with a prodigality other women are ignorant of; and on behalf of Camille Gautier I repeat to you that the means she adopted to pay her debts you should have profited by, and not have been curious about. Had you known me only to-day, you would be but too much delighted at my promise. We are often forced to purchase pleasure for our souls at the expense of our bodies, and which are the more painful after the reward has been lost.

I listened, and looked in admiration at Camille. When I reflected that this wonderful creature, the feet of whom I once scarce dared hope to kiss, consented thus to make me of some importance in her life, and that I was discontented at what she had granted me, I asked myself if man's wishes be limitless, when, though promptly satisfied as mine had been, he yet seeks for something more.

"True," continued she, "we creatures of chance have fantastic desires and wishes, and inconceivable loves. We often give ourselves for one thing and for another. There are persons who ruin themselves for us unrewarded, and others who win us with a bouquet. Caprice is the only relaxation and excuse of our hearts. I yielded to you sooner than to any other man, I swear—and why? Because, when you saw me spit blood you took my hand and wept. What I say is foolish, but I once had a dog that looked at me when I passed as you did—it was all that ever loved me. I could, therefore, have but one pleasure, and it was a sad one. Suffering, as I often do; unhappy

"I am frequently on finding a superior man, who would ask no explanation of me, and who would be the lover of my impressions rather than of my life. This man I found in the Duke, but he is old, and can, on that account, neither protect nor console. I thought I could be content with the life he offered me, but I die of *ennui*, and to do so much not to be consumed, I felt that it would be as well to cast myself into the flames or to stifle myself with charcoal.

"Then I met you, young, ardent and happy, and I sought to make you the man for whom I had been called from my solitude; what I loved in you was not the actual but the possible. You refused your part; threw it aside as unworthy of you; you are a common place lover. Do as others do; pay me, and let us talk no more of it."

Camille was fatigued by this long confession, and to stifle a cough, placed a handkerchief to her lips.

"Excuse all this. I understood, but wished, dear Camille, to hear you say it. Let us forget the rest, and remember but one thing, that we are both young and love each other. Do with me, Camille, what you please; I am your slave, your dog. In heaven's name, tear up the letter and do not let me go to-morrow, it will kill me."

Camille took my letter from the bosom of her dress, and said, with a smile of ineffable sweetness, "Here it is, take it."

I took the letter and kissed her hand. Prudence just then returned.

"Prudence," said Camille, "do you know what he asked?"

"Pardon?"

"Exactly."

"And you yield?"

"I must; but he asks more."

"What?"

"To sup with us?"

"Do you consent?"

"What do you think?"

"That you are both stupid young people. I also think that I am very hungry, and the sooner you consent, the better. Do as you will."

I kissed Camille.

Joseph then came in, looking as if he were delighted with himself, and said: "The trunks are packed."

"Entirely?"

"Yes."

"Then unpack them, for I will not go to-morrow.

CHAPTER XVI.

"I MIGHT," said Armand, "briefly have described to you the commencement of this *liaison;* I wished, however, for you to see how and by what gradation I came to consent to all that Camille wished, and she to be unable to live without me. On the next day I sent her Manon l'Escault. I henceforth, as I could not change the course of the life of my mistress, changed mine. I would not permit myself to reflect on the part I played, for in spite of myself I was as sad as possible. My usually calm life all at once assumed an appearance of noise and disorder. Let her be ever so disinterested, do not think that a mistress costs nothing. Nothing is more expensive than her ceaseless whims for flowers, suppers, etc., which one can never refuse a mistress. As I told you, I had no fortune. My father was, and is, Receiver-General at C——. He has a great reputation for integrity, in consequence of which he easily found the security he needed to enter into employment. This gives him an income of 40,000 francs a year, and, during the last ten years, he has carefully reimbursed his securities, and sought to set aside my sister's dower.

"He is as honorable as possible. At my mother's death she left six thousand francs a year, which my father divided between us on the day of his appointment. When I was twenty-one he gave me an income of five thousand francs more, telling me that, with this sum, I could live very happily at Paris, if I would add to it either by the law or medicine. I came to Paris, and having studied, was admitted to the bar, but, like many young men, I put my diploma in my pocket, and led an idle life in Paris.

My expenses were modest, but in eight months I spent my year's income and passed the summer at my father's, thus having 12,000 a year, and gaining the reputation of being a good son. I did not owe a sou. Such was I when I made Camille's acquaintance. You will see that my expenses increased. Camille was of a most capricious disposition, and was one of those women who look on their amusements as necessities. Consequently, wishing to pass as much time as possible with me, she wrote in the morning that she would dine with me, not at her house, but at some restaurant either in Paris or in the vicinity. I went with her, and thence we would go to the play, so that I frequently spent four or five louis a day, or 2,500 francs a month, a thing which reduced my year to about three months and a half, or else either to incur debt or to break with Camille.

I was willing to submit to all except the last alternative.

Excuse me for giving you these details, but you will see they were the cause of the events that follow. What I tell you is a true, simple story, the simple details of which are its only attractions.

I then saw that as nothing would have influence to make me forget my mistress, I had to find the means she wished to make us meet. This passion took such a possession of me that every moment passed away from Camille seemed a century, that this time had to be consumed by some passion, and that I had to live so fast that I should not notice the passage of time.

I began by borrowing five or six thousand francs on the security of my little capital, and began to play; for, since public gaming houses are destroyed, play is carried on everywhere. In old times, when people went to Frascati's, they had a chance of making their fortunes, and the consolation of saying they went in to win, but now, except in certain circles, where security of payment is maintained, one is almost sure, at the moment of winning an immense sum, not to receive it. It is easy to see why.

It is not necessary for me to tell you of those who rob at cards, the condemnation of whom the events of each day record.

Into this rapid road I plunged, and there is something terrible in the idea, but which was but the development of my love for Camille. What should I do?

The night passed in the Rue d'Antin I would have passed at home without sleep. Jealousy would have kept me awake, and would have wasted my blood. Play however, for a while, turned my fever aside into a passion which, in spite of myself, took possession of me. Then, when about to rejoin my mistress, alone did I become aware of the violence of my love, for—whether a gainer or loser—I left the table pitying those who, unlike me, were not made happy by leaving the table.

Gaming, in most cases, is a necessity, but to me it was a remedy. Cured of Camille, I would have been cured of play.

Amid all this I maintained the greatest sangfroid, and never lost more than I could pay nor more than I could lose.

As I told you, I had consented to be received between eleven o'clock and midnight. It was not easy to resist a life which permitted me to satisfy, without trouble, Camille's countless fantasies. She loved me as much as ever.

While the moral metamorphosis was effected in me, a physical change had taken place in Camille. I had undertaken her cure; and the poor girl who had become an object to me, obeyed me to evince her gratitude. I had contrived to isolate her entirely from her old habits. My physician, whom I made her send for, had told me that prudence and quiet alone could preserve her health, so that for late suppers and sleepless nights I had substitued a hygienic regime and regular life. In spite of herself, Camille grew used to this new life, and felt its salutary effects. When she began to pass a few evenings at home, or when, if the weather was fine, she wrapped herself in cashmere, we went out like children to thread the alleys of the Champs Elysees, she returned fatigued, and retired, after a little music, or after having read a while. Her health then improved rapidly, and the cough which, whenever I heard it, tore my heart to pieces, was hushed.

Before six weeks had passed the Count was definitely sacrificed, and the existence of the Duke alone forced me to conceal my *liaison* with Camille. Even he had often been dismissed while I was in the house, under the pre-

text that she slept, and had ordered that she should not be disturbed.

The time when I was wont to rejoin my father and my sister was come; and, as I did not go, I received letters from both, urging me to come home.

I replied to all these as well as I could, repeating that I was well and did not want money, two things which I fancied would console my father.

One day, cheered by a bright sun, Camille sprang out of bed and asked me if I would pass the day in the country with her.

We sent for Prudence and left together, Camille telling Nanine to say to the Duke that she had taken advantage of the fine day and had gone into the country with Madame Duverney. Besides the fact of Prudence's presence being needed to tranquilize the old Duke, she was one of those women who seem made for these country parties. Her gayety and appetite left not a moment of *ennui* to those she accompanied, and she was perfectly able to command the preparation of all that belongs to the traditional dinners of the environs of Paris.

We had but to decide whither we would go, and Prudence decided this question for us.

"Do you wish really to go into the country?"

"Yes."

"Then let us go to the Daybreak House of Mme. Arnould, at Bourgevat. Armand, take a calash."

An hour and a half after we were at Mme. Arnould's. Perhaps you know that woman's house, where they open a guinguette every Saturday. On the left, where the aqueduct of Morley closes the horizon, there extends on the left an infinite sequence of hills; a river at this place, almost without current, unfolds itself like a broad ribbon of watered silk between the Plain des Gabilions and the vale of Croissy, perpetually sustained by the murmur of the poplars and the willows.

In a broad expanse of beautiful sunlight stood little cottages with red roofs, and manufactories, which, losing their stern character in the distance, complete the landscape. Far in the distance, was Paris. As Prudence had said, we were really in the country, and I must say we had a real breakfast. Madame Arnould offered us a sail in a boat, a thing to which Camille and Prudence readily con-

sented. In the country Camille Gautier, of whom every man the elbow of whom I touched, might be the lover, became, amid persons who had never seen her, amid scenes of nature, an object of love of which there was no necessity of concealing.

The courtesan disappeared. With me was a young and pretty woman whom I loved, and whose name was Camille. The past was forgotten, the future was without clouds. The sun shone on my mistress as it would have done on the chastest bride. We walked in the charming places which seemed made to recall the verses Lamartine sang to Scudo's melodies. Camille was dressed in white, hung on my arm, and repeated, beneath the starry sky, the words she had uttered the previous evening. The world in the distance continued its life, without touching us with its shade, but smiling at our youth and our love. You must add to this, that from the place where we were I saw a charming house of two stories, behind which lay an iron gate, opening into a lawn. Behind this was a beautiful little road, full of mysterious entrances and retirements. Charming flowers covered the entrance to this house, and reached up to the first story. After looking at this house I became satisfied that it was for me.

"What a pretty house," said Camille, who had followed my eyes, and perhaps, my thoughts.

"Yes," said Prudence.

"There," and she pointed to the house in question.

"It is charming. Does it please you?"

"Very much."

"Well tell the Duke to buy it for me. I will take charge of it."

Camille looked at me, as if to ask what I thought of the matter. What Prudence had said destroyed my dream, and the reality yet stunned me.

"Truly, it is an excellent idea," muttered I.

"Well, I will arrange that," said Camille, clasping my hand. "Let us go at once and see if it is to let."

The house was vacant, and to be let at 1,000 francs a year.

"Will you be satisfied here?"

"Am I sure to come?"

"And for whom shall I bury myself if not for you?"

"Well, Camille, let me take this house myself."

"Are you mad? It is not only useless, but it is dangerous. You know that I can accept favors but from one person. Let matters alone, and be silent."

"The result will be, that when I have two leisure days, I will pass them with you."

We left the house and returned to Paris, both filled with these new resolutions. I had held Camille in my arms so closely, that when we left the carriage I already began to understand the arrangement of my mistress, and to look less scrupulously at it.

CHAPTER XVII.

CAMILLE dismissed me at an early hour on the next day, saying that the Duke would come early; promising to write as soon as he had gone, and grant a rendezvous.

I soon received this message:

"I am going to Bourgeval with the Duke. Be at Prudence's at eight to-night?"

At the appointed hour, Camille rejoined me at the house of Mme. Duverney.

"All is arranged," said she, as she came in.

"Is the house taken?"

"Yes, he consented at once."

I did not know the Duke, but was ashamed of deceiving him as I was about to do.

"This is not all," said Camille.

"What else?"

"I shall not be uneasy about Armand."

"In the same house?" asked Prudence, smiling.

"No! but at the Daybreak House, where we breakfasted; while he was looking at the place in the distance, I asked Mme. Arnould if she knew of any suitable place. She has a suite composed of a parlor, chamber and antechamber. This is all he wants, and she charges sixty francs for it. The whole is furnished in such a style as to keep him from hypochondria. I took them at once. Was I right?"

I clasped Camille around the neck.

"This will be charming," added she; "you will have a key of the little door, and I have promised the Duke another, which he will not take, for he will only come by day, being, between ourselves, enchanted by the fancy which, for some time, removes me from Paris, and which for a time makes his family hold their tongues. He, however, asked me how I, who was so fond of Paris, could consent to bury myself in the country. I told him I was ill and needed repose. The poor old man is always on the look-out. We must, therefore, be very careful, my dear Armand, for he will have me watched, and he must not only take a house for me, but must pay my debts, and I unfortunately have many. Does this suit you?"

"Yes," said I, seeking to stifle my scruples, which from time to time would arise.

"We have examined all the details of the house, which will suit us wonderfully well. The Duke was uneasy about everything. Ah! how unhappy you are to have a millionaire for your steward."

"When will you fix yourself?" asked Prudence.

"As soon as possible."

"Will you take your carriage and horses?"

"Everything. You will take care of my rooms during my absence."

Eight days after Camille had taken possession of the country house, and I was at the Daybreak House. Then I began a life it would be difficult, indeed, for me to describe to you. When she first went to Bourgeval, Camille could not at once break her habits, and as the house was one scene of festival all her companions came to see her. For a whole month not a day passed without their being eight or ten persons at the table. Prudence brought her friends and did the honors of the house as if it belonged to her.

The Duke payed for all this, as you may fancy, yet more than once Prudence asked for a 1,000 franc note, in the name of Camille. You knew that I had been fortunate at cards, and hurried, therefore, to comply with the request, and fearing that she would need more than I had, went to Paris to borrow what I had previously done, and had repaid exactly. I was then again in possession of 10,000 francs, without counting my pension. The pleas-

ure of receiving her friends was somewhat lessened by the expense of entertaining them, and especially at the necessity of coming sometimes to me for money. The Duke, who had taken the house for Camille to rest, no longer came thither, fearing always to meet the joyous company, by whom he was unwilling to be seen. One day, having come to dine *tete-a-tete* with Camille, he found her at table with ten persons, who had not finished breakfast at the hour he expected to dine. When, suspecting nothing, he opened the door, a burst of laughter greeted him, and he was forced to retire bruskly before the rude laughter of the persons he found there. Camille arose, and found the Duke in the next room. She did all she could to make him forget the matter, but the self-love of the old man was wounded; he told the poor girl that he was weary of paying for the follies of a woman who could not make herself respected in her own home.

From that time nothing was heard of him, and though Camille dismissed her friends, the Duke sent her no messages. My dream was completely realized, and my mistress was all my own. Without caring for the consequences, Camille made our *liaison* notorious, and I never left her house. The servants called me master, and looked on me officially as such.

Prudence lectured Camille sternly about our new life, but the latter only said that she loved me, and that if the Duke came back she would not give me up. She said those who did not like me might stay away.

One day I overheard Prudence say to Camille that she had something of importance to communicate.

Soon afterward Prudence came from her chamber. I was sure that an interesting conversation was about to take place. I listened.

"Well?" said Camille.

"I saw the Duke."

"What did he say?"

"That he willingly forgave the first scene, but that, having learned that you lived publicly with M. Armand Duval, he could not excuse you. Let Camille leave him, and he would give her all she wanted, whatever it might be."

"What said you?"

"That I would tell you, and persuade you to be reason-

able. Reflect that you destroy yourself, and that Armand never will be able to restore you your position. He loves you with all his heart, but he is poor, and must leave you some day, when the Duke will be unwilling to do anything for you. Shall I speak to Armand?"

Camille was silent, and my heart beat violently.

"No," said she, "I will not leave Armand, nor deny that I live with him. Perhaps it is foolish, but I love him. Now, too, he has grown used to love me without obstacle, he would suffer at the idea of leaving me, though but an hour. Besides, my life will be too short to induce me to make myself miserable for an old man, the very look of whom enervates me. Let him keep his money. I will do without him."

"Well!"

Prudence was doubtless about to make a reply, but I threw myself at the feet of Camille, covering her hands with tears at my happiness.

"My life is yours, Camille; you no longer need that man. I will never leave you, and will reward you for the happiness you confer on me. We love each other, and what matters the rest?"

"Yes, I love you," said she, twining her arms around my neck; I love as I never thought I could. We will be so happy. I will bid an eternal adieu to this life at which I now blush. You will never reproach me with the past?"

Tears stifled my voice, and I could only reply by clasping Camille to my breast.

Turning to Prudence, she said:

"Go and report this scene to the Duke, and tell him we do not need him."

From that time there was no allusion to the Duke. Camille was no longer the girl I had known. She avoided all that could recall the recollections of the life amid which I met her. Never had woman husband, or man wife, more devoted. When we left the house for brief excursions into the woods, none would have fancied that the lady in white, wrapped in a plain silk pelisse, was the Camille Gautier who had lived in such extravagances and been the theme of such scandal.

"Alas! we hastened to be happy, as if sure that our pleasure could not last. We did not go to Paris for two months. None came to see us but Prudence, and the

Julie Duprat, of whom I have spoken, and to whom Camille gave the touching journal I have here.

I passed whole days at the feet of my mistress. We opened the windows which looked on the garden and watched the flowers open and close—neither Camille nor I had ever been so happy. She was child-like in her amazement at trifles. Some days she ran like a child about the garden after a butterfly. The courtesan, who had spent so much money in bouquets, would sometimes pass an hour examining a violet.

At this time she read Manon Lescault, and one day I found her making notes on the book. She told me that a woman who really loved could not act as Manon did.

The Duke wrote to her two or three times. She knew his hand, and gave me the letters to read.

The terms of the letters sometimes brought tears to my eyes.

By closing his purse he had expected to bring Camille back; but, seeing this was useless, he had written, asking leave to return on any terms.

I read those pressing letters, and tore them up—not telling Camille what they contained, and not telling her to see the old man, though a feeling of compassion induced me to do so. I feared, though, lest she would look on such a piece of advice as a wish for the Duke to resume the expenses of the house, and thus avoid the responsibility of the future expenses of our *liaison*.

The consequence was, that the Duke, being unnoticed, ceased to write; and, careless of the future, Camille and I continued to live together.

CHAPTER XVIII.

To describe the details of our new life would be difficult. It was composed of a series of childish trifles, utterly insignificant to relate, but pleasant to us. You know what it is to love a woman; you know how they abridge days, and, with amorous idleness, they enable us to float on to the morrow. You are not ignorant of the oblivion of all things springing from violent love, when mutual. We regret having previously thrown portions of our heart to other women, and never dream of the possibility of clasping another hand than the one held by us. The brain admits neither of toil nor memory, and nothing distracts it from the only thought perpetually offered us. Every day we discover some new charm in our mistress —some unknown voluptuousness. Existence is but the reiterated accomplishment of a continuous passion, and the soul but the vessel containing the sacred fire.

Sometimes, though, I observed that Camille was sad, and that tears were in her eyes. I asked her the meaning of this chagrin, and she replied:

"Ours is not ordinary love, dear Armand. You love me as if I had never belonged to another, and I tremble, lest, repenting some day, you should look on the past as a crime, and force me to return to the life whence you took me. Remember, now, having tasted of a new existence, I should die to change it. Say, then, you will never leave me."

"I swear I never will."

At those words she looked as if to read in my eyes if my oath were sincere, then threw herself into my arms, and said:

"You do not know how I love you."

One evening we sat alone on the balcony, and looked at the moon, which seemed to rise with difficulty from its cloudy bed, and listened to the wind rustling the leaves.

We clasped each other's hands, and did not speak for a full quarter of an hour. At last Camille said:

"It is now winter; shall we go?"

"Whither?"

"To Italy."

"Are you weary?"

"I dread to return to Paris."

"Why?"

"On many accounts." She continued quickly, without giving me time to reply: "Do you wish to go? I will sell all I have, and we will live there. There will remain nothing of what I was, and no one will know who I am. Do you wish to go?"

"Let us do so, Camille," said I, "if you wish it. Why, though, must everything be sold to make you happy? I have not a large fortune, it is true, but enough to enable us to travel for six months if you wish to do so."

"Not so," said she, leaving the window, and sitting on a sofa in a corner of the room, "why spend money? I have already cost you enough."

"It is not generous, Camille, to reproach me."

"Excuse me," said she, giving me her hand. "The weather has affected me, and I did not say what I meant."

Having embraced me she sank into a deep revery.

Many similar scenes took place, and though I was ignorant of what produced them, I saw that Camille was uneasy about the future. She could not doubt my love, for it increased every day, yet I often saw her sad, without any explanation other than a physical cause. Fearing that she would weary of too monotonous a life, I proposed to her to return to Paris. She always rejected this proposition, and assured me she would nowhere be as happy as in the country.

Prudence came but rarely to see us, but wrote letters that I never asked to see, though they always made Camille most thoughtful. I did not know what to think.

I found Camille one day writing in her room. I went in.

"To whom do you write?"

"Prudence. Shall I read you the letter?"

I had a horror of everything like suspicion, and told Camille no—yet I was sure this letter would have informed me of the true cause of her sadness.

The next day the weather was fine, and Camille pre-

posed a stroll to me to visit the Isle of Croissy. She seemed very gay, and it was half-past five when we returned.

"Madame Duverney has been here," said Nanine.

"Has she gone?"

"Yes, she said she was forced to."

"Very well," said Camille, "now let us have dinner."

Two days after came a letter from Prudence, and for a fortnight Camille seemed to have laid aside her mysterious melancholy, which, at a time it really did not exist, she asked me to excuse.

The carriage did not return.

"Why does not your carriage come?" asked I, one day.

"One of the horses is sick—and the carriage needs repair, and it had better be done now when we do not need a carriage, than when we are in Paris."

A week after Prudence came to see us, and confirmed what Camille had told me.

They were together in the garden, and when I joined them they changed the conversation.

When she left in the evening, Prudence complained of cold, and Camille lent her a cashmere.

Thus we passed a month, and Camille became more joyous and gay than she had ever been.

The carriage and the cashmere, however, did not reappear, and this perplexed me. As I knew in what drawer Camille kept Prudence's letters, I took advantage of a moment when she was in the garden, and hurried to the drawer. It was in vain, for it was double locked.

I then searched those in which she usually kept her jewels, and they opened easily.

The cases, however, were gone.

A poignant fear filled my heart. I was about to question Camille about the discovery.

Would she answer me?

"Camille, I wish you to let me go to Paris. None know where I am, and there must be letters from my father. He is uneasy, and I must write to him."

"Go, but come back soon."

I hurried to Prudence's.

"Tell me," said I, without any other preliminary, "where are Camille's horses?"

"Sold."

"The shawl?"
"Sold."
"Her jewels?"
"Pawned."
"Who did so?"
"I."
"Why did you not tell me?"
"Camille forbade me."
"Why did you not come to me for money?"
"She did not wish it."
"What did you do with the money?"
"Paid it away."
"Was she much in debt?"

"Nearly thirty thousand francs; all I said to you was true, but you would not believe me; now you are convinced. The carpet man, when he called on the Duke, was put out of the door, and told that the Duke would have nothing to do with Mlle. Gautier. This man wanted money, and I gave him the few thousand francs I asked you for on account. Some kind souls then told him his debtor, abandoned by the Duke, lived with a young man of no fortune. The other creditors were also informed, and they made seizures. Camille wished to sell everything, but she had not time. I, too, would not have consented to it. She had to pay, and to avoid asking for money sold her horses, her shawl, and pawned her jewels. Do you wish the receipts of the creditors and the tickets of the pawnbroker?"

"Yes—yes, I will give you the amount."
"You will borrow it."
"Yes."

"A pretty scrape you are about to get into. You will get into difficulty with your father and lessen your resources. Thirty thousand francs are not to be picked up every day. Believe me, Armand, I know women better than you do. Do not be so foolish, or you will certainly repent it. Be reasonable. Do not leave Camille, but live with her as you did at the commencement of the summer. She will get out of the trouble, and matters will be gradually arranged between the Duke and herself. The Count de N——, if she will accept him, will pay all her debts and give her four or five thousand francs a month. He has an income of 20,000 francs. This will be a position for her.

while you, after all, must quit her. Do not wait to do so until you are ruined, especially as the Count is a fool, and you will continue to be her lover. She will shed tears at first, but will afterward thank you. Only imagine she is married and deceives her husband. I told you this before; but only in the shape of advice; now I warn you almost of necessity."

Prudence was right.

"This is the state of things," said she, folding up the papers she had shown me. "Some women always anticipate being loved, not loving, or else they would lay money aside, and at thirty you might enjoy the luxury of a lover. Had I known what I know! Say nothing to Camille—take her to Paris. You have lived four or five months alone with her; be reasonable and shut your eyes, nothing more is asked of you. In a fortnight she will take the Count de N ——. She will be economical this winter, and next summer you will resume your present life. Act thus."

Prudence seemed enchanted with her advice, which I rejected with indignation. Not only my love and my dignity did not permit me to act thus, but I was satisfied that Camille would die rather than consent to such an arrangement.

"No more trifling, Prudence. How much money does Camille need?"

"I told you—thirty thousand francs."

"When must this be paid?"

"Before two months."

"She shall have it."

Prudence shrugged her shoulders.

"I will give it to you, but you must swear never to tell her how you got it."

"Be easy."

"If she sends you anything else to sell or pawn tell me."

"There is no danger—she has nothing else."

I went to see if there were letters from my father, and found four.

CHAPTER XIX.

In the first three letters my father was uneasy about my silence, and asked why. In the last, however, he suffered me to see that he was aware of my change of life, and informed me of his speedy arrival.

I had always had great respect and sincere affection for my father; I therefore told him that a little excursion had been the cause of my silence, and begged him to inform me of the day of his arrival, that I might meet him.

I gave my servant my address in the country, and bade him bring me the first letter post-marked C——. I then returned to Bourgeval.

Camille waited for me at the door of the house. Her glance expressed anxiety, and she could not refrain from saying to me;

"Have you seen Prudence?"

"I have received letters from my father, to which I must reply.

A few moments after, Nanine came in panting. Camille spoke to her in a low voice. When Nanine left, Camille said, sitting by me and taking my hand:

"Why did you deceive me? You went to see Prudence."

"Who told you?"

"Nanine."

"How did she know it?"

"She followed you."

"Then you bade her do so."

"Yes; I fancied you must have some motive to act thus at Paris, when you have not left me for four months. I feared lest some misfortune had happened to you, or that you had gone to see some other lady."

"Child."

"I am now sure. I know what you did, but not what has been said to you. This is not what I wish—but I wish to know why you went to see Prudence."

"To visit her."

"That is not true."

"Well, I went to ask if the horse was better, and if she needed your shawl and jewels any longer."

Camille blushed, but did not reply.

I continued:

"I know the use to which you put your horses, diamonds, and cashmeres."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"To ask me for all you need."

"In a *liaison* like ours, if the woman retains any dignity, she should endure every possible sacrifice, rather than demand money from her lover, and make her lover venal. I know you love me, but you do not know how tight is the string that binds a love like mine. Who knows? Some day *ennui* may lead you to fancy all that has passed a careful calculation. What need had I of these horses? Had I any economy in selling them? I can do without them, for you will love me as much without a horse as if I had thousands, and also without shawls and diamonds."

All this was said in so natural a tone that it brought tears into my eyes.

"But, Camille," said I, clasping my mistress's hands passionately, "you knew that some day I would tell you of this, and that even then I would not suffer."

"Why?"

"Because I do not wish your love to rob you even of a jewel. I do not wish you to think that you ever lived with any other man and that the time would ever come when you repented that you had loved me. In a few days your diamonds, jewels, shawl, all will be restored to you. You need them as much as air and life; and, though it be simple, I love you better sumptuous than simple."

"Then you don't love me!"

"That is madness."

"If you did you would suffer me to love you in my own way. You, though, will look upon me as a person to whom luxury is indispensable, for which you ever think yourself authorized to pay. You fear to accept these proofs of my love. You expect to leave me and to shake off all suspicion. You are right, but I hoped better things of you.

Camille would have risen, but I restrained her and said:

"I only wish you to be happy, and to have no cause to reproach me."

"We must separate."

"Why, Camille?" cried I.

"You, who will not let me know your position, and who are vain enough to seek to sustain mine. You, who, by maintaining the luxury amid which I have lived, seek to preserve the moral distance which separates us; and who will not think my affection disinterested enough to share with me your fortune, and enable us to live happily together. Think you I compare a carriage to your love, and that I wish to ruin myself as a slave to a ridiculous prejudice? Suppose you pay my debts, and sell all you have to do so! How long will it last? Two or three months, and then it will be too late for me to adopt the life you propose, for then you would accept nothing from me. Now you have eight or ten thousand francs a year, on which we can live. I will sell all my superfluities, and on this I can make two thousand livres a year. We will hire some pleasant room, in which both of us will live. In the summer we will go into the country; not to such a house as this, but to one large enough for two persons. You will be independent, I will be free, and, for Heaven's sake, Armand, do not reject me for the life I once had to lead!"

I could not reply, for tears of gratitude filled my eyes. My voice was stifled, and I flung myself on Camille's neck.

"I wished," said she, "to arrange all without speaking to you, to pay my debts, and to take new rooms. In October we would have gone to Paris, and all would have been told. As Prudence, however, has told you, you must give your consent now."

I could not resist such devotion, but kissed Camille's hands, and said:

"I will do all you wish," and all she had determined on was consented to.

Then she became madly gay; danced, sang, and chatted about the room.

I saw this new determination, which seemed likely to unite us finally, made her happy, and I determined at once. I fixed the state of my fortune, abandoning to Camille all I inherited from my mother, which seemed alto-

gether insufficient to reward her for the sacrifice I accepted. My father allowed me five thousand francs, so that, whatever happened, I had enough to live on.

I did not tell Camille what I had resolved on, being satisfied that she would object to it.

This income came from a mortgage on a house I had never seen. All that I knew was that, at the end of every quarter, my father's old notary sent me seven hundred francs, in exchange for a simple receipt.

On the day we came to Paris to look for rooms, I went to the notary, and asked him what course I should adopt, and he at once told me all the truth. He did not object, as, in accordance with his position of notary and friend, he might have done, and assured me that he would arrange all matters as well as possible. I advised him to be as discreet as possible to my father, and hurried to meet Camille, at the house of Julie Duprat, where she preferred to remain, rather than to bear a lecture from Prudence.

We set out in search of rooms. All we saw Camille thought too dear, and I too plain. We finally, however, took them in the quietest part of Paris, in a little house isolated from a larger building. Behind these rooms was a charming garden, with walls high enough to separate ourselves from our neighbors, and yet low enough not to shut out the view. This was better than we hoped. When I went to my house to give up my rooms, Camille was with her man of business, who had already done for a friend what she wished him to do for her.

She met me delighted. The man had promised to pay all her debts and to give her twenty thousand francs for all furniture. You see by the prices paid at the sale that thus was gained 20,000 francs by the operation.

We returned to Bourgeval perfectly delighted, and continued to talk of the future, which, thanks to our carelessness and our love, seemed golden-tinted.

Eight days after, when we were at breakfast, Nanine came to tell me that my servant wished to see me.

"Monsieur," said he, "your father is in Paris, and is most anxious to see you at home."

This was the most natural thing in the world; but when we heard it Camille and I exchanged glances. We foresaw trouble. I clasped her hand as an acknowledgement of this, and said, "do not be afraid."

"Come back as soon as you can," said Camille, kissing me, "I will wait for you at the window."

I bade Joseph say to my father that I would soon come.

Two hours after I was in Provence street.

CHAPTER XX.

My father sat in his dressing-gown, at the window, writing a letter. As soon as he put his eyes on me, I saw that he had something to say. I, however, approached him as if his countenance gave me no intimation of his meaning, and asked him when he had come.

"Yesterday evening."

"Did you come hither as you were used to?"

"Yes."

"I am sorry that I was not here to receive you."

I expected at this word to hear the lecture which my father's face promised, but he said nothing, sealed the letter he had written, and gave it to Joseph. My father then arose, leaned against the fireplace, and said:

Armand, we have serious things to talk off."

"I hear you father."

"Will you be frank?"

"It is my habit."

"Do you live with a womam named Camille Gautier?"

"Yes."

"Do you know who she is?"

"A kept woman."

"On her account you came not to see your sister and myself?"

"Yes; I own it."

"Then you love that woman?"

"You see I do, father, as she made me forget my duty to you, for which I humbly ask God to pardon me."

My father, evidently, did not expect such categorical replies, for having reflected a minute, he said:

"You saw that you could not continue to live thus?"

"I feared, but saw not."

"But you knew I would not suffer it."

"I said to myself that I would do nothing contrary to the respect due your name and the traditional honor of our family. I knew, though, I might live as I do, and that reassured me."

"The time for you to change your life is come."

"Why, father."

"Because you do things now which injure the respect due your family. I will be explicit. You have a mistress. This is all right enough, as long as you pay, as a man should, for his pleasures. You, however, for her, forget the most holy things, and permit the noise of your scandalous life to reach our province, and cast a shadow over the honorable name I gave you. This shall not be."

"Let me tell you, father, that those who have thus spoken to you have also kept me well posted up. I live with and love Mlle. Gautier, and all this is the simplest thing in the world. I do not confer on her the name I received from you; I spend only what my means allow; I am out of debt, and have been involved in none of those positions which authorizes a father to speak to his son as you have done to me."

"A father is always authorized to warn his son against evil ways. As yet, you have done nothing wrong, but you will."

"Father?"

"I know the world better than you. No women but those who are perfectly chaste have perfectly pure sentiments. Any Manon will make a Des Grieux. Times and manners are changed. It would be useless for the world to grow old if it did not grow better. You will leave your mistress."

"I am sorry to disobey you, father, but I will not."

"You shall!"

"Unfortunately, father, there is no longer a hospital to which courtesans are sent; if there were, I would follow Mlle. Gautier thither. What do you wish? I am wrong, perhaps, but cannot be happy except as her lover."

"Come, Armand, look around you; see your father, whom you have always loved, and tell him if it be honorable for you to live with a woman to whom all have access."

"What matters all that if she loves me, and becomes regenerated by the love she bears me and I entertain for her? what if she changes?"

"Tell me, sir, do you think it the mission of a man of honor to convert courtesans? Do you think God assigned such a grotesque object to life, and that the heart should have no further enthusiasm? What will be the conclusion of this wonderful case? And what will you think of to-day, when you shall be forty? You will, if you yet can, laugh at your love, provided there be not too profound traces on your past life. What would you then be if your father thought as you do, and abandoned his life to these lusts of love, instead of following the path of duty and honor? Reflect, Armand, and do not talk so foolishly. You will see this woman no more, your father begs you."

I was silent.

"Armand," continued my father, "in the name of your sainted mother, believe me; renounce this life—which you will forget sooner than you think—to which an impossible theory is attached. You are but twenty-four. Think of of the future. You cannot always lead this life, nor can you love this woman, who will cease to love you. You each exaggerate your love, and you exclude yourself from every career. Go one step further, and you may leave the right road, and feel remorse during all your youth. Come with me and spend a month or two with your sister. The tranquil repose of your father's house will cure you of this fever, for it is nothing else. During this time your mistress will be consoled—will take another lover; and when you see that you came near a trouble with your father, you will say I was right to come for you, and will bless me. Will you not go, Armand?"

I felt that my father was right in regard to all other women, but I was satisfied that this was not the case with Camille. The tone he used, however, was so mild that I dared not reply to him.

"Well?" said he, with emotion.

"Father, I can promise nothing: what you say is above my power. Think," added I, as he made a new motion of impatience, "that you can exaggerate this liaison. Camille is not the woman you think her. Her love, so far from casting me into the evil way, on the contrary, may develop the most high toned sentiments. True love, it matters not the woman who inspires it, is always a benefit. Did you know Camille, you would see that I ex-

posed myself to nothing. She is noble as a woman can be, and as disinterested as others are covetous.

"What you say is no reason why you should not accept my offer, for the sixty thousand francs you inherit from your mother and which you wish to give her, are, remember me, all your fortune."

My father had probably nursed this threat as a last blow.

"Who told you I would give her the sum?"

"My notary. Would an honest man have made such a conveyance without telling me? Well, to prevent you from doing so foolish a thing, and ruining yourself for a woman, I came to Paris. Your mother gave you enough to live honorably, and not to be a prodigal to your mistress.

"I swear to you Camille knew not my intention."

"Why, then, did you make it?"

"Because this woman you calumniate and wish me to abandon, makes a sacrifice of all she has to live with me."

"And do you accept this sacrifice? What a man you are to permit Camille to sacrifice anything for you. Come, this is enough, leave this woman. I order you. I will not suffer such things in my family. Pack up your trunks and prepare to follow me."

"Excuse me—I will not go."

My father grew pale.

"Very well," said he, "I know what I have to do."

He rang, and Joseph appeared.

"Take my trunks to the Hotel de Paris." He then went into his rooms and dressed himself.

"You promise me, father," said I, "to do nothing to annoy Camille?"

My father paused, looked contemptuously at me, then said:

"I think you are mad."

He left the room, slamming the door as he did so.

I then took a cabriolet and set out for Bourgeval. Camille waited for me.

CHAPTER XXI.

"At last," said she, clasping me by the neck, "you are come."

I then told her the scene with my father.

"I feared it," said she; when Joseph came to tell us of the arrival of your father, I trembled, as of some new misfortune. My poor friend and I cause all your sorrows. Perhaps you had better leave me and not quarrel with your father. Yet I have done nothing; we lived quietly and would have done so. He knows that you have a mistress, and should be glad it was I, for I loved you, and ask no more than your position admits. Did you tell him how we arranged the future?"

"Yes, and what he said then irritated me most—for he saw in it an evidence of our mutual love."

"What must we do?"

"Remain together and let the storm pass by."

"Will it pass?"

"It must."

"Will not your father be obstinate."

"What else can he be?"

"What know I of all that a father can do to make his son obey him? He will remind you of my past life, and, it may be, will do me the honor of inventing some new story on my account to make you abandon me."

"You know I love you."

"Yes; but I know that sooner or later you must obey your father, and will be finally convinced."

"Not so, Camille; I will convince him. This is but the chattering of some one of his friends, which has made him speak angrily. He is kind and just, and will recover from his first impressions. After all, what matters?"

"Do not say so, Armand. I had rather do anything than suffer it to be thought I had made a difficulty between you and your father. Let to-day pass, and to-morrow go back to Paris, and both your father and your-

self having reflected, may come to an understanding. Do not shock his ideas, but seem to yield; do not seem to adhere so much to me, and he will leave things as they are. Hope everything, and be sure of one thing, whatever betides, Camille will love you."

"Do you swear?"

"Need I swear?"

How pleasant it is to be assured by a voice we love. Camille and I passed the whole day in repeating our plans, as if we understood the need of realizing them. We waited every morning for some event, but fortunately the day brought no news.

On the next day I set out at ten o'clock and reached Paris at noon.

My father had left.

I went to my house, but no one had been there. I went to the notary's, no one had been there. I went to the hotel, and at six o'clock M. Duval had not returned.

I set out for Bourgeval.

I found Camille not waiting for me as she had done at the window on the previous evening, but seated by the fire, which the season already made comfortable. She was lost in thought, so that I stood by her chair before she saw me. When I pressed my lips on her forehead, she quivered as if my kiss had suddenly aroused her.

"You scared me," said she; "what of your father?"

"I have not seen him. I do not know what this means. He was neither at home, nor at any of the places where I expected to meet him."

"Well, you have to go again to-morrow."

"I have a great mind to wait until he sends for me. I have, I think, done all I should."

"Not so. You must return to your father, and to-morrow."

"Why sooner then than on another day?"

"Because," and Camille seemed to blush at the question, "perseverance on your part will seem more urgent, and our pardon will be the quicker."

Camille seemed thoughtful during all the rest of the day. I was forced to repeat what I said to her again and again to get an answer. She accounted for this by fear excited by the events of the last two days. I passed the whole night in reassuring her confidence, and she in-

duced me to leave, on the next day, with a pertinacity I could not explain to myself.

As on the day before my father was absent, but he left this letter:

"If you come to see me to-day, wait until four o'clock. If I am not back by that time, dine with me to-morrow. I must speak with you.

At four, my father had not returned. I left.

On the previous evening Camille was sad but to-day she was feverish and agitated. When she saw me enter she clung to my neck and wept in my arms for a long time.

I asked her about this violent grief, the increase of which alarmed me. She could assign me no possible reason, saying all that occurs to a woman's mind when she wishes an excuse. When she was somewhat calm, I told her the results of my voyage. I showed her the letter of my father, and persuaded her that it promised well. When she saw the letter, and heard what I said, her tears increased, and I called Nanine. Fearing a nervous attack, we put her to bed; without saying a word, she held and clasped my hands, kissing them every instant. I asked Nanine if, during my absence, her mistress had received any letter or visit which could occasion the state in which I found her. Nanine told me no. Yet, since the previous evening, something most unpleasant had occurred to disturb Camille, which she concealed from me. She seemed calmer than she had on the previous evening, and made me sit by her bed. She then smiled with an effort, and assured me of her love. Her eyes were dimmed by tears. I did all I could to make her tell the truth, but she persisted in refusing to give me other than the vague reason she had already assigned.

She finally went to sleep; but it was that sleep which crushes and does not rest the body. From time to time she uttered a feeble cry, sprang up, and being satisfied that I was by her side, made me swear that I would always love her. I could not understand the promulgation of this sorrow from morning to night. Camille relapsed into a kind of stupefaction. For two nights she had not slept.

Her repose was brief.

About eleven o'clock Camille awoke, and, seeing me dressed, she said:

"Then you will go?"

"No," said I, taking her hands, "but I wished you to sleep. It is yet early."

"When will you go to Paris?"

"At four o'clock."

"So soon. Then you will remain with me?"

"Certainly! is it not my delight?"

"What happiness! Shall we breakfast then?" continued she, in a musing air.

"If you wish."

"And then we will be together until the hour of parting."

"Yes, and I will be back as soon as possible."

"You will return?" said she with haggard eyes.

"Certainly."

"True, you will return, and I, as usual, will await you. You will love me, and we will be as happy as we have been since we met."

This was said in so broken a voice, that I trembled lest Camille should become delirious.

"Listen," said I, "you are sick; I cannot leave you thus. I will write to my father not to expect me."

"No, do not," said she, rapidly. "Your father will think I kept you from seeing him. No—no, you must go. Besides, I am not sick, but am much better. I did not seem well when I awoke because I had a bad dream." Camille strove thenceforth to be more gay, and shed no tears.

I insisted on remaining as long as possible with her; she consented, and taking her cloak went with me. Nanine accompanied her, that she might not return alone. Twenty times I had nearly decided not to go. The hope of a speedy return, however, and a wish not to displease my father again sustained me, and the train bore me away.

"Adieu till this evening," said I, as I left,

Camille did not reply. Once before she had not replied similarly, and the Count de G——had passed the night at her house. That event was distant, however, and was so effaced from my memory that, if I had feared anything, it was not Camille's inconstancy.

I hurried to Prudence, whom I asked to see Camille, with the hope that her gayety would amuse her. I found Prudence at her toilet.

"Ah!" said she, "is Camille with you?"

"No."

"How is she?"

"Not well."

"Will she come?"

"Did she expect to?"

Prudence blushed, and said, in a troubled manner:

"I wish to ask whether, when you come to Paris, she will join you?"

"No."

I looked at Prudence, whose eyes fell, for the purpose of reading her meaning.

"I came to ask you, if you have nothing to do, to see Camille. Remain with her, and put her to bed. I have never seen her in such a state as she is in to-day."

"I dine in the city," said Prudence, "and cannot see her to-day, but will to-morrow."

I took leave of Madame Duverney, who seemed almost as abstracted as Camille, and went to meet my father, who looked attentively at me. He gave me his hand and said:

"Your two visits have pleased me, and make me hope that you have reflected, as I have."

"May I ask, father, what has been the result of your reflection?"

"That I exaggerated the report of the stories told me; and that I resolved to be less severe with you."

"What say you?" said I, joyfully.

"I say that as every young man will have a mistress, I prefer your being the lover of Mlle. Gautier to another."

"My dear father how happy you make me!"

We walked together and sat down. My father was as pleasant as he could be, as long as we were together. I would have hurried back to Bourgeval to tell the result, and looked every moment at my watch.

"You look at your watch, and are anxious to leave me. Ah, young people; you always sacrifice sincere to artificial affections."

"Say not so! Camille loves me, I am sure!"

My father did not reply. He seemed neither to doubt nor to believe. He sought to make me pass all the evening with him, and set out the next day; but I had left Camille ill, and asked leave to quit him, promising to return the next day. It was good weather, and he insisted

on accompanying me to the station. Never had I been so happy. The future seemed to open to me as for a long time it had not done. I loved my father better than ever.

As I was about to leave, he urged me again to remain. I refused.

"Do you love me?" he asked.

"Madly."

"Go, then."

He passed his hand over his brow, as if to wipe away a thought, opened his lips, as if about to speak, clasped my hand, and hurried away, saying:

"To-morrow then."

CHAPTER XXII.

The train seemed to go slowly, and I was at Bourgeval by eleven. Every window of the house was dark, and I rang the bell without an answer. For the first time this happened. At last the gardener appeared, and I went in. Nanine got a light, I went into Camille's room.

"Where is madame," said I.

"Gone to Paris."

"To Paris?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"An hour after you."

"She left nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Strange. Did she say she was waited for?"

"No."

Nanine left me.

She may have been afraid, and have gone to Paris to be sure that my visit to my father was not a pretext for a day of liberty. Or Prudence may have written to her on some important matter. When, though, I was alone, I said that I had seen Prudence, who referred to nothing important as likely to make her write to Camille. All at once, I remembered Madame Duverney's question. "She

will not come to-day, then?" when I said Camille was unwell. I also remembered Prudence's manner when I looked at her after this phrase, which seemed to betray an appointment. To this was united Camille's many tears during the night, and the reception made me by my father. From that moment all the occurrences of the day grouped themselves around me, and impressed me with all my father's clemency had suggested."

Camille had almost forced me to go to Paris, and affected calmness when I proposed to remain with her. Had Camille deceived me? Had she intended to return in time and been prevented? Why had she said nothing to Nanine? Why had she not written? Why these tears, this absence, and mystery? Yet, taking into consideration the dispositions we had made, was it not most improbable that she would deceive me? Yes. I sought to fall back on my first ideas. The poor girl has found a purchaser for her furniture, and has gone to Paris to conclude the sale. She has not been willing to inform me, for she knows that, though I accept it on account of her happiness, it is painful to me, and she is afraid to wound my self-love and my delicacy in speaking of it. She wishes to appear only when all is over. Prudence evidently waited for this, and betrayed herself before me; Camille has not been able to conclude her bargain, and has slept home, or perhaps is about to come home, for she is aware how uneasy I must be, and certainly will not leave me alone. Why, then, her tears? Certainly, in spite of her love for me, she could not resolve, without weeping, to abandon the luxury amid which she lived and which made her so much envied.

I willingly forgave her regret, and waited impatiently to tell her, as I kissed her, that I saw the cause of her absence.

Yet, as night advanced Camille did not come. This uneasiness gradually increased and clouded my brow and heart.

Something might have happened. Could she have been injured? Would any messenger come to tell me of a painful accident?

Perhaps day would find me as uncertain and as frightened.

The idea that Camille deceived me did not occur to me.

At last, as one o'clock struck, I said to myself that I would wait an hour longer, but that if Camille was not back by two, I would set out for Paris.

I took a book and sought to reflect. Manon Lescault lay open upon the table, and here and there seemed marked by tears.

After turning over the leaves, I closed the book, the characters of which seemed obscured by my anxieties.

The hours slowly advanced. The sky was overclouded, an autumn rain pattered on the windows. The empty bed seemed to assume the aspect of a tomb—I was afraid!

I opened the door and heard nothing but the noise of the wind in the trees. Not a wheel was heard. The half hour rang sadly from the church belfry.

I began to fear lest some one would come. It appeared to me that only trouble could come at such an hour.

Two o'clock struck, and I listened. The bell alone disturbed the silence of the night. I left the room, and in another apartment saw Nanine a-sleep over her work.

As the door opened she awoke, and asked me if her mistress had returned.

"No, but if she does, tell her that I could not resist my uneasiness, and have gone to Paris."

"So early?"

"Yes."

"But you cannot get a carriage."

"I will go on foot."

"It is raining."

"What of it?"

"Madame will come, or, if she does not, there is time enough to find out what has become of her. You will be murdered on the road."

"There is no danger."

The young girl went for my cloak, threw it around my neck, and offered to wake up Madame Arnould and ask if she had a carriage.

I was not willing, because I feared to lose, in this unfruitful attempt, perhaps more time than I would need in going half the way.

I needed air and physical excitement to exhaust the mental excitement to which I was a prey.

I took the key of the rooms in the Rue d'Antin, and having bid adieu to Nanine, set out.

At first I ran, but the ground was newly wet and fatigued me.

After half an hour of this kind of work, I had to stop to take breath. It was so dark that every moment I struck against the trees which, as they appeared looked like phantoms.

I met two or three carriages, which I soon passed. A calash came at a full trot from toward Bourgeval. As it passed, the hope of seeing Camille broke upon me, and I stopped it, calling her name.

No one answered, and the carriage drove on. When I saw it disappear I resumed my journey. It took me two hours to reach the *barrière del' Etoile.*

The sight of Paris restored my strength, and I hurried down the long alley I had so often crossed. No one passed, and the promenade seemed the city of the dead.

Day began to break.

When I reached the Rue d'Antin the great city was not yet awake. The bell of St. Roche struck five as I entered Camille's house.

I gave my name to the porter, who had received money enough from me to know that I had a right to enter Mlle. Gautier's house at all hours. I passed without difficulty. I might have asked if Camille was at home, but he might not have been able to answer the question, and I preferred to doubt yet longer, for that doubt included hope.

I went up stairs. I listened at the door, seeking to catch a sound or a motion—nothing. All seemed as silent as the country.

I opened the door and entered. I went into the bedroom and drew the bed-curtains. The bed was empty.

I was almost mad. I went into the dressing-room and called Prudence, but her window remain closed.

I then went down and asked the porter if Mlle. Gautier had been at home during the day.

"Yes," said he, "with Mme. Duverney."

"She said nothing?"

"No."

"Do you know whither they went?"

"They went in a carriage?"

"What kind of one?"

"A *coupe.*"

"What does this mean?"

I rang the bell next door.

"Where are you going, sir?" asked the porter.

"To Madame Duverney's."

"She is not at home."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes; a letter was brought here yesterday which I have not been able to give her."

The porter mechanically showed me the letter. I knew Camille's hand. I took the letter which was directed to "Mme Duverney for M. Duval."

"This letter is for me," said I, and I showed him the address.

"Are you M. Duval?"

"Yes," said I.

"Ah! I often saw you at Mme. Duverney's."

When in the street I broke the seal, and had a thunderbolt fallen at my feet I could not have been more surprised.

"When you read this letter I shall be chosen of another. Return to your father, to that chaste young girl, your sister, who is ignorant of all those miseries we have known, and which would soon have made you suffer as that lost girl called Camille, whom you persisted in loving, and who is indebted to you for the only happy hours of a life which she hopes will not last long."

I fancied, when I read the last word, that I had become mad, and I dreaded lest I should fall on the pavement. A cloud passed before my eyes, and the blood rushed to my temples. I gradually recovered, looked around me, amazed that the tenure of others lives was preserved. I was not able to bear the burden of the blow Camille had inflicted on me alone.

I remembered that my father was in the same city, and that in ten minutes I might be with him, and that I would tell him all the cause of my grief. I ran like a madman to the Hotel de Paris, and found my father's key in his door. I went in. He was reading. From the little surprise he expressed at seeing me, one might have read that he expected me. I threw myself into his arms without speaking a word. I gave him Camille's letter, and, falling on the bed before him, wept scalding tears.

CHAPTER XXIII.

When things had resumed their course, I could not think that the day which was about to begin would not be like the previous one. There were moments when I imagined that some circumstance which I could not remember had caused me to pass the night out of Camille's house, but that if I went back to Bourgeval I would find her as uneasy as I had been, and she would ask me why I had remained away.

From time to time I read Camille's letter, to convince myself that I did not dream. My physique gave way beneath the moral shock of anxiety—my night's journey, and the morning's news, had exhausted me. My father took advantage of the total prostration to ask a formal promise from me that I would leave her. I was but too willing to be consoled. All that I can remember, is, that about five o'clock on that evening he made me get into a post-chaise, having previously caused my trunks to be packed and placed with his, and took me away.

I did not know what I was doing until the city had disappeared, and when the solitude of the road told me how desolate was my heart.

Then my tears began to flow. My father had seen that even his words did not console me, and he let me weep without speaking a word, merely clasping my hand as if to recall to my mind that I had a friend beside me During the night I slept, and dreamed of Camille, and then I started up to find that I was in a carriage. When I saw the reality of my condition, I let my head fall on my breast. At last my father said:

"You see I was right when I denied that she loved you."

He did not abuse his advantage and we reached C—— without his having said anything but words completely unconnected with passed events.

When I embraced my sister I remembered the words

Camille used in her letter, and saw that, good as she was, my sister could not make me forget my mistress. The hunting season had begun, and my father fancied it would be an amusement for me, and he, therefore, got up parties with his friends and neighbors. I went without repugnance and without enthusiasm, with the apathy which had, since her departure, characterized all my actions.

We were hunting by droves. My gun was uncocked by me, and I dreamed. I watched the passing clouds. I let my thoughts wander in the lonely plains, and from time to time I heard the huntsman call out that a hare passed within thirty paces of me. These details did not escape my father, and he was not deceived by my exterior calmness on my return. He saw that, crushed as it was, my heart would have some terrible reaction which would, perhaps, be dangerous, and while seeking not to seem to console, sought to amuse me. My sister naturally was not in my father's confidence, and she could not see how or why I had all at once become so moody and abstracted. Sometimes, surprised amid my sadness, I gave her my hand, and she would clasp it as if to ask me for a tacit pardon for the injury I had done her.

Thus a month passed, but I could bear no more—memory of Camille constantly pursued me. I had loved and still loved that woman too much for her to become all at once an object of indifference to me. It was necessary either for me to love or hate her. It was necessary for me to see her and at once.

This desire took possession of my mind and impressed itself with all violence, so that ultimately my body yielded to it. I must see Camille, not in a month, a fortnight or a day, but on the next day or the day after, and I told my father I must leave him, as business called me to Paris, but that I would return immediately. He doubtless guessed my motive, for he insisted that I should remain, as the transaction of any business in my irritable state might result in consequences fatal to me. He besought me at length in tears to return soon to him.

I did not sleep till I reached Paris. What then was I to do? I did not know; but it was necessary that I should see Camille. I went to dress, and as the weather was fine, I strolled to the Champs Elysees.

In about half an hour I saw in the distance the carriage of Camille. She had repurchased her horses, but she was not in the carriage. I looked around, having remarked her absence, and saw that she was on foot, accompanied by a woman I had never before seen.

As she passed me she grew pale, and a nervous smile contracted her lips. My heart beat violently, but I gave a cold expression to my face and bowed distantly to my old mistress, who at once went to her carriage, into which she and her friend entered.

I knew Camille, and saw that an unexpected meeting with her had overpowered me. She had ascertained my departure, which had calmed her mind about the future, but seeing me pale as I was, she knew my return had an object, and she asked herself what that was. Had I found Camille unhappy, if to avenge myself I had been able to come to her aid, I would have pardoned her, and at least have done her no injury. I, however, found her happy, or at least apparently so. Another had restored her to the luxury in which I could not maintain her, and our rupture consequently assumed the character of self-interest. I was humiliated in my self-love and interest. I could not be indifferent to what she did, consequently what injured her most was indifference. I had then to feign this sentiment not only to her, but to others. I sought to keep up a smiling face, and went to see Prudence.

The *femme de chambre* went to announce me, and I had to wait awhile in the ante-chamber. Prudence at last appeared, and took me into her boudoir, and as soon as the door was closed I heard a light step in the passage, and a door violently closed behind me.

"Do I disturb you?"

"Not at all. Camille was here, but when she heard your name she left."

"Is she afraid of me?" asked I.

"Not at all; but she thinks it may be disagreeable to you to see her."

"How so?" asked I, making an effort to breathe freely, for I was stifled by emotion. "She left me to get back her carriage and diamonds, and she was right. I saw her to-day," I said negligently.

"Where?" said Prudence, who looked at me as if to see

whether I was the man she had really known so much in love.

"At the Champs Elysees. She was with another woman, who is very pretty. Who was she?"

"What is she like?"

"A blonde, with curls, blue eyes, and very elegant——"

"Olympe. A very pretty girl."

"With whom does she live?"

"With no one in particular."

"She lives ——"

"Rue Tronchet, No. 13. Do you wish to see her?"

"No one knows what may happen."

"And Camille?"

"To tell you that I have forgotten her would not be true. But I am one of those men on whom a rupture has much influence. Now, Camille dismissed me so cavalierly that I am ashamed to have loved her as I did, for I really did." You may imagine my tone, but the perspiration stood on my brow.

"She loved, and yet loves you; and the proof is, that after seeing you, she came at once to tell me of the fact. She was pale and trembling almost to a fainting fit.

"Well, what did she say?"

"She told me, he will certainly come to see you, and beg him to pardon me."

"I do. You can tell her so. She is a good girl, but she is, after all, a girl, and I should have expected her to act as she did. I am even grateful for her resolution. For I can but ask myself to-day whither a maintenance of our resolution to live together would have led us."

"One will not be satisfied when she hears that you understood the necessity of your condition. It was time for her to leave you, for the scamp to whom she sold her furniture, when he saw her creditors, and found out how much she owed, was afraid, and in two days she would have been sold out."

"And now all is paid?"

"Nearly."

"Who furnished the means?"

"Count de N——. He paid twenty thousand francs, but he came to the bottom of his means. He knows that Camille is not in love with him, yet he is kind to her. You have seen him. He purchased her carriage, horses

and jewels, and also gave her as much money as the Duke. If she would be quiet, this man would remain with her a long time."

"What is she doing? Is she in Paris all the time?"

"She would not go back to Bourgeval after you left. I went to look after all her business, and made up a package that belonged to you, which you can send here for. There was one little box, with your name on it, which Camille insisted on taking charge of. If you wish it I will ask for it.

"Let her keep it," said I, for I felt the tears in my eyes, as I remembered the village in which we had lived so happily, and of Camille's wish to keep something that had belonged to me.

Had she entered then, all my plans of vengeance would have faded away, and I would have fallen at her feet.

"Besides," said Prudence, "I never saw her as she is now. She never sleeps, but hurries to balls, suppers and drinks much wine. Recently, after a supper, she remained a week in bed, and when she left it, she began again, though she had nearly killed herself. Why not see her?"

"Why? I came to see you, because you have always been kind, and that I knew you before I did Camille. To you I am indebted for having been her lover, and to you also I owe the fact that I am so no longer."

"I did all I could to make her leave you, and I believe some day you will thank me for it."

"I am doubly grateful to you," for I was disgusted to see this woman act thus seriously.

"Are you going?"

"Yes."

"When shall I see her?"

"Soon. Adieu."

Prudence escorted me to the door, and I returned home with tears in my eyes, and with a thirst for vengeance in my heart.

Camille was like other women, for the profound love she bore me ever contended with a wish to resume her past life and luxurious orgies. This I said as I lay awake. for I did not think as calmly as I affected. being disposed to see in her orgies the hope of stifling thought and memory.

Unfortunately, the evil passion prevailed in me, and

I only sought a means of tormenting the poor creature.

The Olympe, with whom I saw Camille—was she not her friend—the person whom she visited most? Soon after my return to Paris she gave a ball, and as I supposed Camille would be there, I obtained an invitation.

When, full of painful emotions, I reached the ball, it was already in full blast. They were dancing, and in one of the quadrilles I saw Camille with de N——, who seemed proud of her, and seemed to say to all. "This woman is mine."

I leaned against the fire-place, just opposite to Camille, and looked her in the face. As soon as she saw me she became troubled. When I thought that after the ball I would lose all this, and that she would belong to the rich fool with whom she was, the blood rushed to my face, and I could not but break up their amours.

After the contra-dance, I went up to salute the mistress of the house, who exhibited to her guests magnificent shoulders. She was beautiful, as far as form was concerned—far more so than Camille. I saw at once that the man who embraced such a form might be as proud of it as de N——was of his mistress.

At that time she had no lover. It would not be difficult to become hers. I had only to show gold enough to dazzle her. I resolved that she should be my mistress. I began to play the suitor to Olympe.

Half an hour after, Camille left the room, pale as death.

CHAPTER XXIV.

This was something, but not enough. I understood the power I exerted over this woman, and I abused it basely. When I think that now she is dead, I ask God to pardon me for the wrong I did her.

After supper, which was of the most exciting character, they began to play. I sat by Olympe, and risked my money with such boldness that she could not but notice me. In a moment I won a hundred and fifty or two hundred louis, which I placed before me, and at which she looked. I was the only person who was not entirely preoccupied by the play. All the rest of the night I won, and lent money to the bank, which had lost all it had.

At five we left. I had won three hundred louis. All of the players had gone, for I was the friend of none of these gentlemen. Olympe held the lamp at the stairway, and I was about to go, when, turning back, I said:

"I must speak with you."

"To-morrow."

"No, now."

"What have you to say?"

"You shall see."

She went to her rooms.

"You have lost?" said I.

"Yes."

"All you have?"

She hesitated.

"Be frank."

"Yes."

"I have won three hundred louis—here they are." I threw the money on the table.

"Why this?"

"I love you."

"Not so; you love Camille, and wish to avenge yourself. A woman like me is not mistaken, but I am too young and too handsome to accept the post you propose to me."

"You refuse?"

"Yes."

"Reflect, Olympe, you will have refused a man who offers you three hundred louis. You would not reject an agent who made such propositions. I preferred to treat with you. Accept, without looking at the reasons."

Camille, like Olympe, was a courtesan; yet I would never have dared to utter to her what I did to Olympe. The reason was that I loved Camille, and divined instincts in Olympe which, at the moment I was about to conclude such a bargain disgusted me.

She accepted, and at noon I left her house—an accepted lover.

From this time I subjected Camille to daily punishment. I gave my new mistress a carriage; I gamed; and, in fine, played the part of a man in love with a woman like Olympe. The news of my new passion soon became known.

Prudence herself was deceived, and fancied I had forgotten Camille. She, whether she saw into the motive why I acted thus, or was, like others, mistaken, replied with great dignity to the insults I cast on her every day. Whenever, however, I met her, she seemed to suffer, and she became pale and sad.

My repentance was, however, but a flash, and Olympe, who concluded that it was best to lay all self-respect aside, and that by wounding Camille she would obtain all she wished from me, excited me and insulted her as often as she met her, with all the insolence of a woman authorized by her lover.

Camille no longer went either to the ball or to the play lest she should meet me. Anonymous letters then succeeded, and made my mistress tell many scandalous things about Camille.

One must have been very mad to reach this point; but I was like a man drunk with bad wine, who falls into one of those conditions where the hand is guilty of any offense. Amid all this I suffered martyrdom, for Camille met all my attacks with calmness, without disdain, and appeared to me superior to myself.

One evening Olympe had gone out, I know not whither, and had met Camille, who on that occasion did not spare the fool who had insulted her, so that the

former had to give way. Olympe returned furious, and Camille was taken away fainting.

On her return, Olympe told me all that had passed, and said that Camille finding her alone, had wished to insult her because she was my mistress, and that I must write her word to respect her as the woman I loved.

I need not say to you that I consented, and made my letter as bitter, cruel, and annoying as possible.

The blow was too violent for her to bear it in silence. I feared that an answer would come, and did not leave home all day.

About two o'clock in the afternoon Prudence came, and I sought to assume an indifferent air, as I asked to what I owed the honor of her visit. Madame Duverney was much moved, and said that during the three weeks I had been in town I had not suffered a single opportunity to escape of insulting Camille; and that she was sick, and that the scene of the previous evening, and my letter, had forced her to go to bed. In fine, without reproaching me, she told me, through Prudence, that she had neither moral nor physical force to bear what I had inflicted on her.

"Mlle. Gautier may dismiss me, but she has no right to insult a woman I love because that woman is my mistress. To do so is a pretext."

"You are," said Prudence, "under the influence of a heartless woman. Love her, but that is no reason why you should torture a woman who cannot defend herself."

"Tell Mlle. Gautier to send de N—— to speak to me. We will then be on equal terms."

"You know she will not do so—let her alone. Could you see her you would be ashamed of the way you act. She is pale, coughs, and will not live long."

Prudence then gave me her hand, adding:

"Come and see her. Your visit may lead to happy results.

"I do not wish to see de N——."

"He is never at her house. She will not bear it."

"If Camille wishes to see me, she knows where I live. I will never enter her house."

"Will you receive her respectfully?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, she will come."

"Let her do so."

"Will you go out to-day?"

"I will be home all the morning."

"I will tell her so."

Prudence left. I can give you no idea of the impression which agitated me for some time; but about nine o'clock I heard the bell ring, and I was so excited that when I opened the door I was forced to lean against the wall for support. The ante-chamber was fortunately dark, and the state of my countenance was unobserved.

Camille came in. She was dressed in black, and wore a veil so thick that I could scarcely see her face, which, when at length I saw it, looked like marble.

"I am here, Armand," she said. "You wished to see me."

She let her head fall, and burst into tears. I drew near, and asked her what was the matter.

She clasped my hand, but did not reply, because the tears rolled down her cheeks. A few moments later, having recovered her calmness, she said:

"You have done me much wrong, Armand, without a cause."

"No cause?" said I.

"Nothing but what circumstances required."

I do not know if, in all the course of your life, you ever suffered, or will suffer, as I did at the sight of Camille. When last she was at my house she sat where she now did, but since then she had been the mistress of another, and other kisses than mine had touched her lips, other arms than mine had embraced her.

"I have come, Armand," said she, "because I have two things to ask of you. Forgive me for what I said to Olympe yesterday. Whether voluntarily or no, since your return you have wronged me, so that henceforth I shall be unable to bear the fourth part of the emotion I have hitherto done. Have pity on me, and learn that a man with a soul has worthier things to do than avenge himself on a woman as sick as I am. Take my hand and you will see I have fever. I left my bed to ask your pardon, your friendship, your indifference."

I took Camille's hand, which shivered beneath her velvet cloak, and pushed the chair in which she sat close to the fire.

"Do you think," said I, "that I have not suffered? Remember the night you left. I went to Paris for you on that night and received the letter which almost made me a madman. How, Camille, could you deceive one who loved you almost to madness?"

"Let us not speak of that, Armand, for I came but to clasp your hand as a friend, not as an enemy. You have a young, pretty mistress, whom you love; be happy with her and forget me!"

"You are happy, doubtless?"

"Do I look as if I were? Do not aggravate my sorrow, for you, better than any one else, know how great it is."

"It only depends on you to be unhappy no longer, if things are as you say."

"No; things are not controlled by my will. I obeyed an imperious necessity and reason, which you one day will know and forgive."

"Why not tell me?"

"They would not reunite us, and perhaps would separate you from persons you love."

"What persons?"

"I cannot tell you."

"You tell a falsehood."

Camille arose and went toward the door. I could not see this mute exhibition of grief without emotion, and hurrying to the door, I said:

"You shall not go!"

"Why?"

"Because in spite of all that I have done, I love you still, and wish to keep you here."

"To dismiss me to-morrow?"

"No, Camille, no—I will forget all, and we will be as happy as we hoped to be."

Camille shook her head in doubt and said:

"Am I not your slave? Do with me as you please, for I am yours."

Taking off her cloak and hat, she loosened the bosom of her dress, for the blood was evidently rushing to her head and stifled her. A dry cough followed:

"Tell the driver to go home."

I delivered the message myself. When I returned Camille lay, with chattering teeth, before the fire.

I took her in my arms, undressed her, and put her in my bed.

For a moment I thought I could forget what had passed since we left Bourgeval, and I said to Camille:

"Shall we leave Paris?"

"No," said she, "we would both be unhappy, and I could no longer contribute to your pleasures. As long, though, as my breath lasts I will be the slave of your caprices; at any hour of the day or night you please, come and I will be yours, but do not link your prospects too closely with mine, you would make us both unhappy. I shall be yet pretty for a time. Take advantage of the fact, but ask no more."

When she had gone I was amazed at my solitude, and two hours after I was yet in bed. At five o'clock I went to the Rue d'Antin, and Nanine admitted me.

"Madame cannot receive you," said she, with much annoyance.

"Why?"

"The Count de N. is in, and has told me to admit no one."

"True," muttered I, "I had forgotten."

I returned home like a drunken man, and in a few moments of delirium, I said to myself that woman laughs at me, and taking a note of five hundred francs I inclosed it, saying: "You went away so early this morning that I forgot to pay you. I inclose it."

When my letter was gone, I went out to shake off my remorse. I went to Olympe's and found her trying on dresses. When we were alone, to amuse me, she began to sing me obscene songs. She was the type of the brazen courtesan, without either heart or mind, for me at least! some man might have inspired her with such a dream as I had of Camille.

She asked me for money, which I gave her and then went home.

Camille had not replied, and I need not tell you with what agitation I awaited the next day. At half-past six the postman brought me an envelope with my letter and the note it contained.

"Who gave you this?"

"A lady who left with a servant in the Boulogne mail, and who bade me take it as soon as the coach was gone."

I went to Camille's.

"Madame left to-day for England," said the porter.

Neither hatred or love retained me at Paris, and as one of my friends was about to travel in the east, I told my father of my wish to accompany him, and at once received letters and funds. A week after I sailed for Marseilles.

At Alexandria I learned from an *attache* of the consulate-general whom I had met, of Camille's illness. I wrote the letter, the answer to which you saw and which I received at Toulon. I at once sought to know the rest.

Now I have only to show you a few sheets I received from Julie Dupont and which are indispensable to what I have told you.

CHAPTER XXV.

ARMAND, wearied by his long story, often interrupted by tears, put both hands on his brow and closed his eyes, as if to think or to seek to do so, after having given me a few pages in Camille's hand. A few moments after, more rapid respiration proved to me that he was asleep, but so lightly that the least sound might awaken him. I read as follows, and copied it without adding or erasing a letter:

"To-day is the 15th of Dec.; I am ill, and have been so three or four days. To-day I took to bed. The weather is bad, and I am melancholy. No one is with me. I am thinking of Armand; and where you are when I write these lines. They tell me you are far from Paris, and may almost have forgotten Camille. May you, to whom I owe the happiest hours of my life, be happy.

"I could not resist the idea of explaining to you my conduct, and I wrote to you a letter—but coming from one like me, it may be regarded as a falsehood, unless death sanctify its authority and convert the letter into a confession.

"To-day I am sick; I may die of this disease, having always had a presentiment that I would die young. My mother was consumptive, and I have lived so as to contract this disease or aggravate my only inheritance. I

am, however, unwilling to die without your knowing what to rely on, when you think of me, a poor girl you once loved more or less.

"The following are the contents of the letter which I wish I could re-write to give you another proof of my truth:

"You remember, Armand, that just before your father came and found us at Bourgeval, the involuntary terror his coming caused? Of the scene between you, of which you told me? On the next day when you were at Paris a man brought me the following letter from M. Duval. The letter, which I attach to this, besought me in the most earnest terms to get rid of you on the next day on any pretext, and to see your father, who wished me to tell you nothing of his communication with me. You remember the urgency of my persuasion to you to go to Paris again. You had been gone about an hour when your father came. I cannot tell of the impression his serious face caused; your father believed that all women were heartless, irrational, and a kind of man-trap, ready to crush and lacerate any hand extended to them without discrimination. He had written me such a letter that I consented to see him, and he came. In his first words there was enough hauteur, menace, etc., to cause me to make him understand that I was in my own house, and had no account to give him of my love for his son.

"M. Duval grew somewhat calm, but said that he could no longer suffer his son to ruin himself because I was beautiful, and that I should not use my charms to blast the prospects of a young man by leading him into such expenses as you made.

"To this there was but one reply. To show that since I had been your mistress, no sacrifice had been required of you to keep me faithful to you, and that I asked for no more money than you could give, I showed my receipt from the pawnbroker, and of the people who had the various things I had parted with. I told your father of my determination to sell all my furniture to pay my debts, and live with you, without subjecting you to any heavy burden. I told him of our happiness, of your having revealed to me a calmer and gentler life, and he yielded to evidence, and gave me his hand, asking pardon for his first impressions. Then he said:

"'Madame, not by menaces, but by prayers will I undertake to obtain a greater sacrifice than you have made to my son.'

I trembled at this preamble. Your father drew near to me, took my hand, and continued in an affectionate tone:

"'Do not be offended at what I say, but see that life has cruel necessities to which the heart must submit itself. You are kind, and your soul has generous impulses which many women who despise you, perhaps, do not appreciate. Remember that there is a family as well as a mistress, duty as well as love, that the time will come when Armand to be respected will need a better position. The time will come when, it matters not how you love Armand Duval, people will see in him but a man who, for a kept woman, lost all he had. The day of reproach and insults would then come, and be sure that, as with others, you will each bear the chain you might break. What will you then do? Your youth will be gone, my son's prospects will be ruined, and I, his father, must look to one of my children for the reward I expected from both. You are young, you are beautiful, and life will console you. You are noble-hearted and the memory of a good action will atone for much that is passed. For six months that he has known you, Armand forgets I wrote four times to him without his once thinking of replying to me. I might have died without his knowing it. Whatever be our wish to live otherwise, Armand, who loves you, will not consent, and will see that no obscure position suits your beauty. Who knows, then, what he will do? He has gambled, I know, and also that it was without your knowledge; but in a moment he might have lost what it has taken me years to amass, as the dower of my daughter, and to sustain my old age. That might, and yet may be.'

"'Are you, too, sure that the life you leave for him will not some day attract you again? Are you sure that you love him so that you can never love another? Will not your *liaison* oppose difficulties in your lover's way, for which your love will be unable to console him? Reflect on all this, madame. You love Armand. Prove it by the only means which are in your power. No misfortune has yet befallen you, but will, perhaps, greater and sooner than I foresee. Armand may become jealous of one who,

may have loved you; he may be killed, and what then would you suffer in the presence of that man who would ask of you the life of his son?'

"'Know what brought me to Paris. I have a daughter, young, pure, chaste as an angel. She loves, and that love has been the dream of her life. I wrote all this to Armand; but, engrossed by you, he did not reply. The man she loves is a member of an honorable family, and asks that all in mine shall be equally so. The family of the man who is to be my son-in-law have learned that Armand is at Paris, and have declared that the marriage will be broken off if he continues this life. The prospects of one who has not injured you are in your hands. Can you crush them? In the name of your love and your repentance, Camille, grant me the happiness of my child!'

"I wept in silence, my friend, at all these reflections; which, often occurred to me, but which from a father acquired new power. To myself I said what your father dared not, though the words were twenty times on his lips. I said that, after all, I was but a woman of pleasure, and that, in spite of any reasons I might ever give for our *liaison*, it would always seem a calculation, for my past life forbids me to dream of the future—and accepted obligations for the discharge of which I could offer no pledges. I loved you, Armand, and the manner used by your father, the chaste sentiments he awaked in me, the esteem of the kind old man which I was about to win, and yours, which sooner or later, I knew would be mine, awoke in my breast noble sentiments which exalted me in my own eyes. When I remembered that, one day, the old man who implored me to preserve the reputation of his son would mingle mine as a mysterious name in his prayers, I was transformed and proud in spite of myself.

"The excitement of the moment, perhaps, exaggerated these impressions, but such they were, and the new feelings aroused me crushed all memory of happy days passed with you.

"'Very well,' said I. 'Think you I love your son?'

"'Yes,' said M. Duval.

"'Disinterestedly?'

"'Yes.'

"'Do you know his love was the dream and hope of my life?'

"'Firmly.'

"'Well, sir, embrace me once, as if I were your daughter, and I swear to you that the only chaste kiss I ever received will make me firm against my love, and that, before a week has passed, your son will be at your house; perhaps unhappy, but cured forever.'

"'You are a noble girl,' said your father, 'placing his lips on my brow; 'and you undertake a thing that God will aid you in. I fear that you will obtain nothing from my son.'

"'Be easy; he shall hate me. He must think there is an impassable barrier between us.'

"I wrote to Prudence that I accepted de N——'s propositions, and that she must go to say that she and I would sup with him. I sealed this letter, and begged your father, on his arrival in Paris, to send it to the address. He asked me its contents, and I told him it related to the happiness of his son. Your father bade me adieu, and, as he moved his lips from my brow, I saw two tears of gratitude, which seemed like the baptism of my faults; and when I had just consented to deliver myself to another man I was proud of this new offense. M. Duval left me; I was but a woman, and when I saw you I could not but weep. Was I right? I ask you this question to-day when I am sick and perhaps will never leave my bed. You know how I suffered as our inevitable separation drew near.

"Your father was not there to sustain me, and there was a moment when I was about to own all, so terrified was I at the idea that you would despise me. One thing, Armand, it may be that you will not believe, that I asked God to grant me strength, and that he heard my prayer is proven by the fact that he granted me power. At this supper I yet needed support, for I did not wish to know what I was about, so fearful was I that my strength would fail. Who would have thought that I, Camille Gautier, would have been so terrified at the thought of a new lover? To forget myself I drank, and when I awoke I was in the Count's bed.

"This is the whole truth, my friend. Judge me and pardon me, as I forgive you the wrong you did me.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"What followed this fatal night you know as well as I do, but you can neither know nor suspect what I suffered during our separation.

"I learned that your father had taken you away, and I did not doubt that you would be long absent, so that I was amazed and surprised on the day I met you at the Champs Elysees. Then came a series of days, during each of which I was insulted by you, and received them almost with joy, for they proved that you yet loved, and never lost sight of me. Do not be surprised at this happy, joyous martydom, but I was not at first strong enough to bear it. I will not remind you, Armand, how you rewarded the last proof of love I gave you, and how you drove from Paris a dying woman who could not resist your voice when you asked her to pass the night with you, and who madly believed that by yielding she would obtain absolution for past and present sins. You had the right to act as you did, Armand, for you paid for my nights more dearly than any other. All is gone, then, for Olympe has replaced me with M. de N——, and has undertaken to tell him the reason of my departure. The Count de G—— was in London, and is one of those men who attach to the love of a woman like me but its just importance, and who remain the friends of women they have had without either hatred or jealousy; he is, in fact, one of those nobles who do not admit us to their hearts, but who open both ends of their purses. I thought of him at once, and saw him. He received me kindly, but was the lover of a lady of rank, and feared to compromise himself. He introduced me to his friends, and gave a supper, after which one of them took possession of me. What was I to do? Kill myself? It would have overshadowed your life with a useless remorse. I was very near death; I was without a soul, so to say, or the life of an automaton; my disease hourly increasing,

I grew pale and thin, and men who buy their love look at it in advance. There were many far better looking women, and I was forgotten. This was the state of things until yesterday; now I am ill, and have written to the duke for money, for I have none, and my creditors have come back, bringing me their bills with the most merciless perseverance. Will the Duke reply? Why are you not in Paris? Your visits would console me."

"December 20.

"The weather is horrible, and it snows. For three days I had such a fever that I could not write a word. Nothing new. Every day I look more anxiously for a letter from you. It does not and will not come. Men alone never pardon. The Duke did not reply. Prudence has resumed her voyage to the pawnbroker. I spit blood, and it would pain you to see me. You are happy in being beneath a warm sky, and not having a winter of ice and snow, as we have. To-day I sat up for a time behind the curtains of the window, and watched the crowds, with which I have done forever, pass. No one looks up at my windows, yet a few young people left their names. Once when I was sick, when you did not know me, and would have received nothing from me but rudeness, you asked for me every day. I am sick again. We have lived six months together. I have loved you as well as woman can, and I have received not a word of consolation; this, though is but chance, for if you were in Paris you would come."

"December 23.

"My physician will not let me write every day. Memory, in fact, does but increase my fever. Yesterday, however, I received a letter which did me much good by the sentiments which it contained. It was from your father:

"'MADAME:—I have just learned that you are ill. Were I in Paris I would myself call on you, and if my son were here I would tell him to visit you. Armand is, however, six or seven hundred leagues distant, and I, therefore, wrote to tell you how much I am pained by your illness, and to express my sincere hopes for your recovery. One of my friends, Mr. H——, will call on you. Be pleased to see him, as he has a commission to discharge

at my request. Receive, madame, the assurances of my most sincere interest.'

"Such was the letter I received. Your father is a kind man, and few live who are so worthy of your love. This morning M. H—— came, and seemed much annoyed by the delicacy of the business confided to him. I sought to refuse him, but he said to do so would mortify M. Duval, who had ordered him to pay me a certain sum, and more if I needed it. I accepted this, which, coming from your father, cannot be looked upon as alms. If, when you return, I am dead, show your father this letter, and tell him the poor woman to whom he deigned this consolation shed tears of gratitude as she prayed for him."

"January 4.

"I have passed a bad night. I did not know the body could suffer so. Oh! my past life! I pay twice for it to-day. I can scarcely breathe—delirium and cough will make the rest of my life miserable.

"My dining-room is full of bonbons and presents of all kinds, brought me by my friends. Some among the men hope that at some future day I will be their mistress. Could they see me!

"Prudence made her presents from my stock. It is thawing, and the doctor tells me if the warm weather continues I may go out.

"I rode out to-day to the Champs Elysees, which was crowded. One might have fancied it was the first smile of spring. All looked a May day. I never fancied that a sun ray contained so much life and joy as I felt to-day. I met almost all the people I knew, gay and busy with pleasure. How many are happy without being aware of the fact. Olympe passed in an elegant carriage given her by M. de N——. She sought to insult me, but she does not know how far I am removed from this sort of thing. A kind lad I have known for some time asked me to sup with him, one of his friends being, he said, most anxious to know me. I smiled sadly, and gave him my burning hand, and never did I see such amazement. I went home at four o'clock and dined with some appetite. The exercise did me good. What if I get well?

"How the aspect of life and the happiness of others make those wish to live who in the solitude of their chambers pray for death."

"January 10.

"The hope of health was but a dream. I am again in bed covered with blisters.

"We must have either done much that is wrong before our birth, or are to be most happy after death; or God would not permit this life to be so full of trials and tests."

"January 12.

"I still suffer. The Count de N—— sent me money yesterday but I did not take it. That man is the cause of your not being with me. The old days at Bourgeval, where are you? If I ever leave this house alive it will be to make a pilgrimage to our old home. I will never leave it alive though. Who knows if I shall write to-morrow?"

"January 25.

"For eleven nights I have not slept and feared I was about to die. The doctor forbid me to touch a pen, but Julie Dupart, who is with me, suffers me to write a few lines. Will you not come back before I die? Is all over forever between us? If you came, I would get well. Why should I."

"January 27.

"This morning I was aroused by a loud noise. Julie, who slept in the ante-room, rushed into the dining-room, and I heard her voice contending with those of men. They came to seize, and I told her to let them do what they called justice. When I think what may happen if I do not die—if you return, and I see the spring—if you love me and we resume our old life.

"Fool! I can scarcely hold the pen with which I write this wild dream. Whatever betide you, Armand, I love you, and would have been dead long ago if I had not been sustained by the memory of this love and a vague hope that I will see you again."

February 3.

"The Count de G—— has come; his mistress deceived him, and he is very sad, for he loved her. He told me all. The poor fellow is very much pressed or he would pay off the law-officers for me. I told him of you, and he promised to tell you of me. As I forgot I had ever been his mistress, he also did so. He is a kind heart.

"The duke sent to ask for me. I do not know what keeps the old man alive. He remained several hours with me and did not say twenty words. He, with all his years, is yet about, while I am crushed with pain. The weather is bad and no one comes to see me. Julie sits with me whenever she can. Prudence, to whom I cannot give as I used to makes a pretext of business to stay away.

"Now, that I am dying, in spite of what the doctors say, for I have several, I regret that I troubled your father. Had I been able to take but a year of your life, I could not have avoided passing it with you, for, at least, I would die clasping a friend's hand. Had we lived together I would not be so near death.

"God's will be done."

"February 4.

"Come, Armand, I suffer horribly—I am dying. I was sad yesterday and wished to pass elsewhere than at home an evening that promised to be long. The duke came in and the sight of this old man, forgotten by death, seems to make me die faster.

"In spite of the burning fever I had myself dressed and taken to the Vaudeville. Julie rouged me or I would have looked like a corpse. I went to the box where we first met, and all the time I had my eyes fixed on the seat you occupied. They took me home half dead, and I spat blood all night. To-day I cannot speak and can scarcely move—my God, I shall die! I expected to die, but not to suffer so."

"February 18.

"M. Armand, since yesterday Camille has been worse. She has lost her voice completely and also the use of her limbs. It is impossible to describe what our poor friend suffers. I am not used to emotions of this kind and I am constantly terrified.

"How delighted I would be if you were near us. Camille is constantly delirious, but whether in that condition or sane she always pronounces your name when she can speak. The doctor told me that she would not last long. Since she has been so sick the old Duke has not been back. He told the doctor the sight did him too much injury.

"Madame Duverney acts badly. This woman who expected to get more money out of Camille, on whom she has chiefly subsisted, has contracted obligations she could not help, and seeing that her neighbor can no longer aid her, does not even come to see her. All abandon her. M. de G——, pursued by his creditors, has been forced to return to London. Before he went he sent us some money and did all he could. They have, however, made a seizure, and the creditors only await the hand of death to sell.

"I wished to use all my resources to prevent all these seizures, but the law people told me it was useless, and that there were other judgments; as she must die, too, it is better to abandon all than to save for her family who have never been kind. You can not imagine her miserable state of yesterday; we had no money at all, covers, jewels, plates, are all in pledge. The rest is either made over or sold. Camille is yet aware of all that is going on around her, and she suffers in every respect. Large tears roll down her cheeks, which have grown so pale that you would not be able to recognize them. She made me promise to write to you when she could no longer do so —and I write before her. Her eyes are directed toward me, but she does not see me—her eyes being already veiled by death. She smiles, and I am sure all her thoughts are yours.

"Every time the door was opened her eyes brightened as if she thought you were about to enter—but when she sees that she is disappointed a painful expression animates her eyes and her cheeks become purple."

"February 19.

"How sad to-day is! This morning Camille was almost stifled, and the physician bled her so that she regained her voice. The doctor advised her to see a priest, and, as she consented, he sent to St. Roche for a priest.

"During this time Camille called me to her bed-side, asked me to open a clothes-press, and pointed out a bonnet and laced chemise. She then said in a feeble voice:

"'After confession, I shall die, and you must bury me in these. It is a last coquetry!'

"She then kissed me with tears in her eyes, and said:

"'I can speak, but am stifled when I do.'

"I shed tears, and opened the window. The priest came in soon after; I went to meet him.

"When he heard at whose house he was, he seemed to fear a bad reception.

"'Go in father,' said I.

"He remained a short while in the room, and when he left me he said:

"'She lived as a sinner, but she is dying like a Christian.'

A few moments after he returned, accompanied by a chorister and sacristan, who preceded him, ringing a bell to announce the presence of God. They entered the bed-room, which had hitherto resounded with such strange sounds, and which now became a holy tabernacle.

"I fell on my knees. I do not know how long the impression produced by the spectacle continued. I do not think that, until I shall be reduced to the same condition, I shall be equally impressed. The priest placed the holy oil on the feet, hands and brow of the dying woman, recited a brief prayer, and Camille was ready to soar to Heaven, where surely she will go, if God regards the trials of her life and holiness of her death.

"During this time she said nothing, and made no motion. Twenty minutes after I should have thought her dead, had I not heard the difficulty of her respiration."

"February 20, 5 P. M.

"All is over. Camille died last night about two, and no martyr ever suffered as she did, if we may judge from her cries. Twice or thrice she sat erect in her bed, but sank back from exhaustion; silent tears fell from her eyes, and she died.

"Then I approached her, and called to her. She did not reply, and I closed her eyes and kissed her.

"Poor Camille! I wish I were a holy woman that this kiss might commend you to God!

"I dressed her as she had requested me, and then went for the priest at St. Roche, and had tapers burned for her, and for two hours I prayed in the church. I gave the poor the money she had. I am not well-informed in matters of religion, but I think God will know my tears to have been true, my prayers fervent, my alms sincere, and that he will have mercy on her who died young and beautiful, yet had no other to close her eyes."

"February 23.

"To-day the funeral took place. Many of Camille's friends came to the church and wept sincerely. When the procession left for Montmartre two men alone followed it. The Duke, who was supported by two footmen, and the Count de G., who came for the purpose from London.

"I write these details from her house, amid my tears, and by the light of a lamp burning over a dinner-table I do not touch. Nanine had it prepared, for I had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours.

"I can bear these sad impressions no longer, for I am no more my own than Camille was, and, therefore, I describe these events from their very scene, lest if I suffered time to pass, I might not be able to give them all their sad exactitude."

CONCLUSION.

"Did you read it?" said Armand, when I laid down the manuscript.

"I see what you must have suffered, if all I read be true."

"My father has confirmed it."

We talked some time of her sad fate, and then I went home to rest.

Armand was yet sad, but somewhat consoled by the recital of the incidents, and soon revived. We then went to see Julie Duprat and Prudence.

Prudence had failed, and she told us that Camille was the cause of it, as during her illness, she had borrowed much money, for which she had given notes that she could not pay. Camille had died without paying her, or giving any receipts which would enable her to call herself a creditor.

By means of this fable, which Madame Duverney told everywhere to excuse herself, she drew a bill of a thousand francs on Armand, who did not believe her, but paid it out of respect to Camille's memory.

We then went to the grave of Camille, which beneath an April sun was putting forth its first flowers. Armand had one duty to fulfil—to see his father—and he asked me to accompany him.

We reached C ——, where I found M. Duval just what, from the description, I had imagined him. He received Armand with tears of joy, and he clasped my hand affectionately. I soon saw the paternal sentiment predominated in the receiver's heart. His daughter, named Blanche, had that transparent countenance, that calmness of expression, proving that the soul receives but holy impressions, and that the lips uttered but holy words. She smiled at the return of her brother, the chaste young girl being ignorant that for her a courtesan had sacrificed happiness at the very sound of her name.

I remained for some time with this happy family, which was fully occupied with him whose return restored their hearts.

I returned to Paris, where I wrote this story as I heard it. It has one indisputable merit, truth. From this story I could not draw the conclusion that all women, like Camille, are capable of acting as she did, but I have known that one of them, in the course of a life, entertained a serious affection, and that she suffered and died. I told what I heard, as was my duty.

I am not the apostle of vice, but will make myself the echo of noble misfortune wherever I find it.

The story of Camille is an exception, and therefore I tell it. Had it been a generality, it would not have been worth while to write it.

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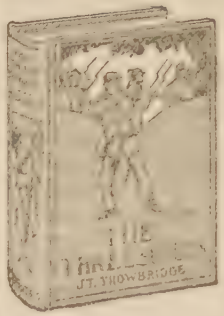

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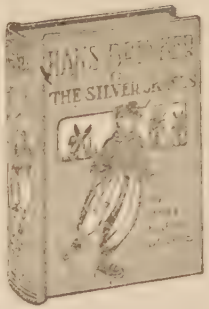

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